- How Tom Wolfe and Bill Blass close libraries to New York kids
- Jonathan Alter on Clark Clifford, Tom Braden on James Angleton, and Sam Donaldson on TV newswomen

The Washington Monthly

JUNE 1991/$3.50

Who's the Real Affirmative Action Profiteer?

(Hint: His father is an alumnus)

by John Larew

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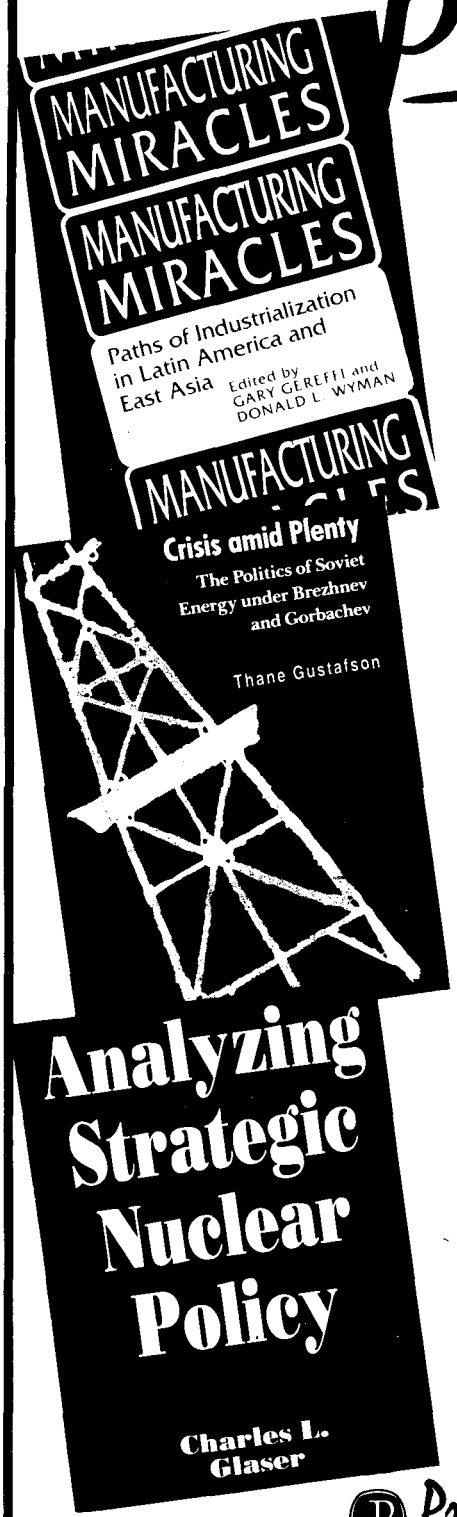

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The Washington Monthly

Volume Twenty-Three, Number 6 June 1991

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LETTERS

George and Norm's excellent adventure

Regarding your smug and condescending discussion of George Bush's motivations and policies in the Gulf: "If Bush had the resolve to stick to the embargo," as you put it, then we could still be tied up in legalisms, and Kuwait would still be being raped.

I suspect that George Bush's "adventure in the Gulf" will be remembered as a triumph long after *The Washington Monthly* has ceased to publish. I also suspect that, 10 years from now, many yuppies will be wishing they had been part of it. (Ask James Fallows about that.)

PAUL M. LION
McLean, Virginia

One of the most admirable qualities of *Washington Monthly* editors and writers has been your willingness to rethink theories after receiving a dose of reality. That's why this dove turned hawk is disappointed by your continued statements that sanctions were a superior alternative to war against Iraq.

Leaving aside the question of whether sanctions in the absence of combat could have worked (the examples of successful use of sanctions you offered—Rhodesia and Nicaragua—were implemented in conjunction with guerrilla warfare), it is clear the sanctions could only work if they were inflicting pain on the people of Iraq. And it seems to me self-evident that the pain had to be at least equal to the pain caused by the air and ground wars.

Sanctions that inflict pain are not nonviolent. They cause hunger, illness, and death. The pain would have been less visible than the pain caused by a falling bomb, and it would have taken longer to be felt, but most of the pain would have been inflicted on children and the lower classes.

If you believe that it was worthwhile to get Iraq out of Kuwait, then you have to say that Bush's policy did the job in an effective way. If you do not think that objective was worthwhile, then sanctions should have been opposed as fervently as the war.

JERRY SKURNIK
New York, New York

You have done it again. Your magazine is full of pieces striking the mark concerning George's latest folly. Your piece "Casualties of War" [April] in particular illuminates the error of it all.

I continue to admire your thinking and fortitude. Thank you.

BURLEIGH F. WYMAN

All right, you win. It seemed that the last thing I needed was to receive in-depth coverage of corruption and stupidity in American government and business, but your uncompromising opposition to this recent war is so intelligent, refreshing, and unusual that I have to re-up. Now if you could only prescribe an antidote to the feelings of hopelessness that arise upon reading your muckraking magazine, I'd be all set.

PETE PFEIFFER
Solon, Maine

The real heroes of this war are the people who spoke their minds and now stick to their guns. You, the people of *The Washington Monthly*, make me proud to be American.

DANIEL BORGSTROM
Fullerton, California

Sacred cows

Elizabeth Lesly's excellent article on tax exemptions for churches ["Pennies From Heaven," April] fails to mention one other serious difficulty with granting tax-exempt status to religious organizations. In order to determine which groups merit the exemption, the government must, of necessity, decide which are "legitimate" religions and which are not. Such a determination comes perilously close to the "establishment" of religions by the government. Government-approved religions realize substantial benefits under our system of taxation, while those that the government refuses to sanction do not. Simply treating religious organizations as corporations would avoid this pitfall. If such a corporation meets the standards for status as a nonprofit or charitable organization, fine. If not, it should be taxed on the same basis as any other for-profit institution.

JEFF TUCKER
Reston, Virginia

Elizabeth Lesly's "Pennies from Heaven" failed to mention that the ministers and employees of churches pay taxes on their earned income. She made it sound as if preachers live on tax-free money. They don't. They pay their taxes just like everybody else.

Moreover, whatever Jimmy Swaggart or any other minister does with his personal money (on which he or she has paid income taxes) is no argument for taxing churches.

If Lesly is going to argue for taxing churches, then let her keep the church separate from its employees. She seems to malign the churches' ministers in her zeal to collect money from the church.

JACK WHITEHEAD
Fremont, Ohio

Elizabeth Lesly argues that churches should be taxed because 1) they have a lot of money and, 2) in her estima-

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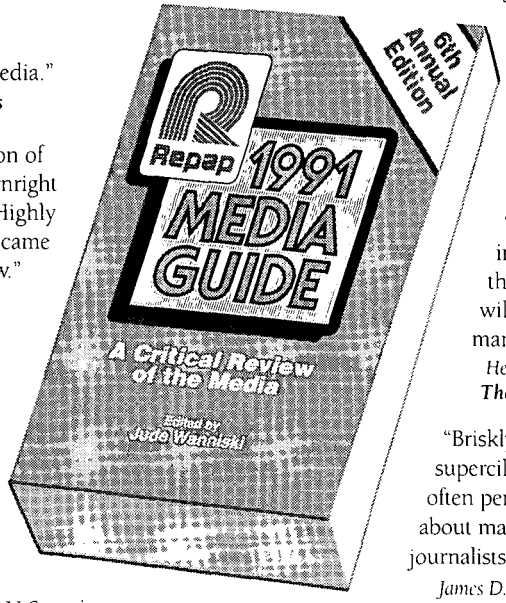
*G.R. Graf, **Choice***



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tion, they're not spending it very well. Therefore, she posits, the government should be getting some of that excess cash to put to better use.

I would point out that the government is run by the same people who go (or don't go) to church. They'll probably waste some of it, too.

Churches have not been taxed for many good reasons, perhaps the most compelling of which is that the people who give their money to churches already give the first part of their worldly goods to the government.

Jesus Christ said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." He wasn't against paying taxes. But we've already paid Caesar.

SARA PEARSAUL
Chicago, Illinois

Spurning Japanese

For a magazine that was designed to "increase the sophistication of the American press," you seem to show an extreme naiveté with regard to Japan. Almost every month you find a new sycophant to write another glowing article about Japan.

Your readers should know that the descriptions of Washington, D.C., schools as decaying buildings without heat, hot water, or paper towels actually applies to almost every school in Japan, as I have learned as a high school teacher here. The same is true about the idea that American schools are creating a class system separating the college educated from the rest—in fact, it's even more true in Japan, with its pass/fail college entrance examination and its tendency to hire employees based on the ranking of their college. The only difference is that the phrase "college educated" would not be used in Japan, where college is generally regarded to be a farce.

It is also shocking to have your magazine imply that Edward Deming's statement, "People are entitled to self-esteem," is somehow relevant to Japan. Anyone with the most rudimentary knowledge of Japanese society knows that one of its main goals is to crush a person's self-esteem in order to create a compliant worker for the company and a submissive subject for the government.

I could go on, but I won't. I hope that in the future, *The Washington Monthly* will apply the same tough standards that it applies in articles about America to articles about Japan.

STEVEN FEINSTEIN
Shizuoka, Japan

St. Peters

In April's "Tilting at Windmills," you suggested that we desperately need Sam McCorkles. Having read the rest of the issue, I'm convinced we need more people like Charles Peters. Great work.

KAREN TREANOR
Forest Hills, New York

The Washington Monthly

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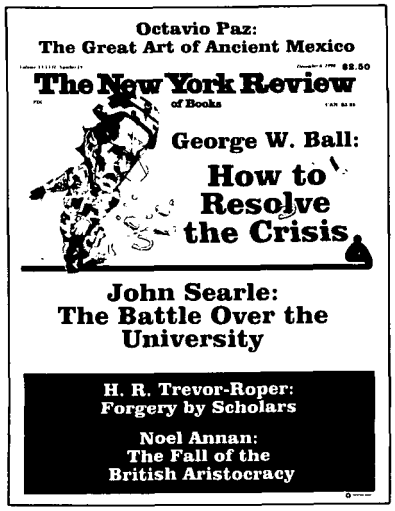
Saddam Hussein by David Levine



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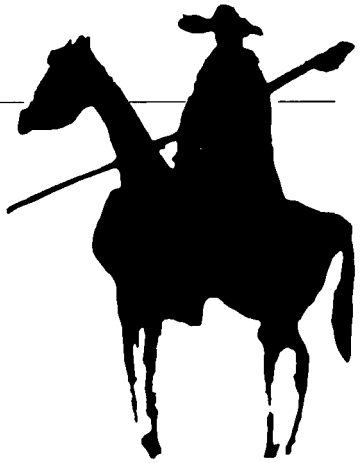

If you think George Bush's invasion of Panama was a good idea, consider the headline from the April 18 *Washington Post*: "Panama Said to Revert to Pre-Invasion Drug, Money Activity." And if you still, after realizing that hundreds of thousands died during and immediately after it, think that our war against Iraq was another good idea, ponder this headline from the April 20 *Post*: "Saddam's Power Seen Increasing." . . .

To give you a feeling for the scene at Au Bar—the Palm Beach nightclub where a certain 30-year-old man met a certain 29-year-old woman (you won't catch me plunging into hot water along with *The New York Times*)—a recent male guest was dressed in a sportcoat, necktie, black miniskirt, black stockings, and black high heels.

"I'm a multimillionaire and I like to dress in women's clothes," he told a reporter as he stepped into his Rolls Royce to depart. . . .

If the accounts of life in Palm Beach are not enough to convince you that the rich are insulated from the recession, consider this recent bulletin from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, an oasis of wealth outside Detroit.

"People are building their 12-bedroom mansions, buying their Ferraris and $4,600 crocodile totebags, racing to the fashion shows to order $2,800 pantsuits, and flying first-class to Aspen for the weekend," reports the *Times*.

Bloomfield Hills is inhabited by all those overpaid executives who have presided over the decline of our automobile industry. But before some Madame Defarge stirs up resentment among laid-off auto workers, she should know that at least a few residents of Bloomfield Hills are feeling the pinch—"showing a bit of pragmatism, according to one auto dealer, by buying a second Mercedes, a convertible, maybe, instead of a Lamborghini." . . .

It is unsettling to learn from Bob Woodward's new book, *The Commanders*, how little George Bush's extensive experience in Washington has taught him about decisionmaking in a crisis. John Kennedy, on the other hand, was a quick study, able to absorb the painful lessons of the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 in time to apply them to the Cuban missile crisis in the fall of '62.

Chief among these lessons was not to rely on a narrow group of advisors but to expand the circle to include able people outside the chain of command—people who are likely to argue with the president and bring original points of view to the discussion.

For the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy relied almost solely on the advice of the CIA's Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell, who had been the original sponsors of the idea of an invasion by exiles and had a stake in defending that concept even when reality made it seem increasingly unlikely to succeed. By contrast, when the missile crisis began to unfold, Kennedy sought the advice of a dozen or so people outside the chain of command, including his brother Bobby, Dean Acheson, and Ted Sorensen. The result was a wise decision that avoided war but attained our objectives.

So what does Bush do as the crisis in the Gulf unfolds? He relies on a small group that sometimes seems to include just himself and Brent Scowcroft and that, even when expanded, includes at most Cheney, Baker, and Powell. Instead of encouraging argument, he conducts the meetings in a way that does not encourage systematic deliberation. Only once is an argument, by Powell, heard in favor of sanctions instead of war. It is quickly brushed aside, not with any discussion of its merits but with Bush's *ex cathedra* pronouncement that it is not "politically" feasible. James Baker also seems to have favored allowing more of a chance for sanctions, but there is no evidence that he argued the case with the president in any of those meetings. Only Powell dared challenge Bush in the way that Acheson did Kennedy—in a group meeting that everyone knew history would record. After reading Woodward's revelations, *Newsweek*'s Washington editor, Evan Thomas, concluded: "If the war had ended badly, *The Commanders* would seem like . . . the story of a president plunging toward disaster, heedlessly

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dragging his armies over the cliff." But because the war ended in a military victory—although I'm sure history will view it as a human disaster—George Bush will not learn the error of his ways. I tremble to think how he would handle an equivalent of the missile crisis. . . .

The headline of the lead article in the April 2 *New York Times* read: "Low Medicaid Fees Seen as Depriving the Poor of Care." Nowhere did the article mention that the greed of physicians—whose average annual income now exceeds $100,000—might have something to do with the problem. Why aren't some of these well-paid doctors willing to accept modest fees in order to care for the poor? . . .

A major problem here is that employees of the major media are now earning so much that they identify with the wealthy. Last month the editors of *The New Republic* cut one sentence from a short piece of mine. The words they chose not to print were: "It's better to make $60,000 working for the Environmental Protection Agency than $260,000 working for Davis Polk." Could it be that, given the television income and the speaking fees some of those editors are earning, $60,000 seemed like the minimum wage? . . .

Want to avail yourself of the free travel the Air Force provides to our leaders? If you promise to renew your subscription this very moment, I'll tell you the secret passwords. Just go to the nearest air base and tell the guard, "I'm a tech rep." That, we have learned from Paul Rodriguez of *The Washington Times*, is the description given a female friend of Rep. Les Aspin's on the manifest of a C-20 jet that was used to fly the congressman and Sharon P. Sarton from Denver to Andrews Air Force Base. The flight, by the way, cost the taxpayers $28,000 because it first had to fly from Andrews to Denver to pick the couple up. . . .

Clark Clifford was the James Baker of the Truman era, the good source who was rewarded with favorable treatment by the reporters he cultivated. Margaret Truman did not like him. A mutual friend once told him why: "Since you came into her father's White House, you have gotten all the good publicity." When the Gridiron Club, a group of prominent Washington journalists, put on a skit at its 1947 dinner that depicted Clifford as a ventriloquist and Truman as his dummy, Clifford said he was indignant at the insult to the president. He was so indignant that he proceeded to attend each Gridiron Dinner for the next 44 years.

I admire Clifford for having given mostly wise advice to our leaders over the years, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading his absorbing biography. But I do not for one second believe his current self-portrait as a duped innocent, the unfortunate victim of a scandal in the twilight of a life of snow-white virtue.

Clifford got off on the wrong foot at the beginning of his law career. One of his first two clients was Howard Hughes—about whom need I say more? The other was Phillips Petroleum, which came to him through the late Senator Robert Kerr. Kerr, whose priorities were accurately suggested by his credo, "I represent myself first, the state of Oklahoma second, and the people of the United States third," was a man who delighted in corrupting other men by obligating them to return the favors he did for them. He succeeded Lyndon Johnson as the patron of that notorious fixer, Bobby Baker, and was described in these pages as "one of the few modern politicians who matched the Duke of Newcastle, the renowned purchaser of governments in 18th-century England." In 1952, Clifford supported Kerr for the Democratic presidential nomination over such candidates as Averell Harriman and Adlai Stevenson. Was this a conscientious choice of the best man or an installment payment for the Phillips account? . . .

The top tax rate may be 31 percent, but last year George Bush paid only 22 percent. He paid zero in state taxes. The reason is that he claims Texas, which has no income tax, as his state of residence. One has to wonder just how many days Bush spent in Texas in the past 20 years compared to those he spent in Washington, or for that matter at Camp David, Maryland, or his vacation home in Kennebunkport, Maine. . . .

The Pentagon's policy of manipulating and/or stonewalling the press during the war in the Gulf proved so successful that it seemed likely to be imitated by other public officials who don't want unpleasant news to get out. Indeed, the process is already under way in New Jersey, where the Essex County Department of Public Safety has suspended an employee because he gave an interview to a reporter for *The New York Times*. In the course of the interview, the employee, who was an instructor in an education program for prison inmates, talked about needing more chairs and volunteer help for his classroom. He also mentioned that no warden had visited his classroom for more than a decade. This got him suspended. Then, after 23 years of service, he was fired.

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The press must rebel against the Dick Cheneys who think they can silence potential whistleblowers. There is a reluctance on the part of some members of the press to speak up about this situation because they don't want to appear to be crybabies. But they must realize that in protesting against Cheneyism they are not just crying for themselves but for the public, which is being deprived of facts it has a right to know. . . .

At times, as we noted last month in a discussion of a possible Petersstan, it seems the worldwide celebration of ethnicity has gotten a bit out of hand. Another example comes from West Virginia, where the state's Division of Culture and History has negotiated an agreement with the Committee on Native American Archaeological and Burial Policies governing the excavation of a burial mound. The committee, which believes that "[an] Indian's wisdom comes from his heart, and an Indian's heart is always in touch with the Sacred Circle," has forbidden menstruating women to touch grave material. It has also banned the press from the excavation site—which makes one wonder: Is Dick Cheney in the Sacred Circle? . . .

You may recall that when three reactors that were our sole source of tritium had to be shut down in 1988, the Pentagon and the Department of Energy told Congress that all three would have to be restarted to ensure an adequate supply of tritium, which is an ingredient used in nuclear weapons that decays and must be replaced periodically. The cost of repair to the three reactors has now reached $2.6 billion and, according to *The New York Times*, is still climbing. Only now the DOE engineers tell us that just one of the nuclear reactors is needed and that even it will have to operate at only 40 percent of capacity. Yet the General Accounting Office says even that is not necessary. Enough tritium is available by reprocessing fuel from retired warheads. . . .

An increasingly obligatory scene in the movies of the last decade has involved a couple at home eating Chinese food from carryout cartons. The roots of this new ritual must be the two-job family in which no one has time to cook. It may be too late to corner the market on soybean futures, but I would certainly regard La Choy and Kikkoman stock as solid investments. . . .

Another investment opportunity I have recommended has once again proved rewarding. It is betting good horses to show—meaning run third or better—on Derby day or on the days of other major races that attract large numbers of the unsophisticated to the track. These people tend to bet on horses whose only merit is that their names remind the bettors of Aunt Betsy or Uncle George.

And since the nieces and nephews are new to the science of handicapping and have little confidence in their selections, they usually make the most cautious bet possible, which is show. This means that the show pool contains a large amount of silly money to reward more prudent wagerers. Thus at this year's Derby, the winner, Strike the Gold, paid $5.40 on a $2 show bet. So did the second horse, Best Pal. If you had bet $2 each on them and on the two other favorites to show, you would have ended up with a profit of $2.80. Or say you put up $80,000; you would have had a $28,000 profit on the day. This technique is scorned as wimpish by most male bettors, but it was said to have been the secret to the fortune amassed by the late Colonel E. R. Bradley, a legendary figure in the history of the sport of kings. . . .

If there is anyone who has pursued the sure thing more resolutely than the colonel did, it is Donald Kennedy, the president of Stanford University. Having been caught cheating the government by possibly as much as $200 million in overhead charges on research contracts, Kennedy is now asking the government for $3 million more. For what? To figure out why the university overbilled the government in the first place and to redo the charges properly. . . .

One reason the bureaucrat doesn't want the public to find out about his omissions is that he will then be forced to do what he hates the most, which is to take action.

Consider Richard Darman, whose OMB had done nothing but sit on a proposed regulation requiring easier passenger access to aircraft exits, which would have saved lives in the recent Detroit and Los Angeles crashes. But when Rep. Barbara Boxer and Rep. John Conyers threatened to hold public hearings that would have exposed the OMB's failure, lo and behold, just six days later the proposed regulation was announced. . . .

"On a dark day in 1980, Donald Petersen, the newly chosen president of Ford Motor Company, visited the company's Detroit design studios," began an article in the September 1990 issue of the *Stanford Business School Magazine*. Curiously, an article by Gregg Easterbrook in the October 1986 issue of *The Washington Monthly* had begun with the same words, except that it

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omitted "Detroit" and added "very" before dark.

This is the first of many similarities between the two articles. The Stanford article says, "The most commonly used adjective for Petersen is 'quiet.' For relaxation, he collects rocks—not exactly the profile of a revolutionary." Easterbrook had written the identical words; only the punctuation was different.

This is an old problem for the *Monthly*. Over the years, our small circulation has meant that a good many writers thought they could get by without mentioning our name. Richard Reeves once called us "the most unacknowledged source in Washington."

Sometimes the lack of acknowledgment is unintentional, but it can still be maddening. For example, in his excellent new book on Kennedy and Khrushchev, Michael Beschloss tells the story of Kennedy's secret pledge to the Soviet leader—relayed by Bobby—to remove our missiles from Turkey. The *Monthly* printed that story in 1972, repeated it many times thereafter, and was the first to see the significance of the story: that Kennedy, instead of out-machoing Khrushchev, had in fact made a sensible deal—which meant the lesson of the crisis was that reasonable compromise had saved the day, not Ramboism, as Americans were led to believe at the time. Another point that we made in 1982 and that Beschloss credits someone else with originating five years later was that it was indefensible for John Kennedy to leak a story to *The Saturday Evening Post* condemning Adlai Stevenson for even suggesting such a cowardly course as removing the missiles from Turkey, when that was in fact what Kennedy secretly had done. . . .

Eleven California police officers were caught cheating on a promotion examination last May, but no action was taken against them. Why not? Because they had not been told not to cheat. . . .

I find that the recession is stirring my hopes for the return of one of the few good things about the Great Depression: the two-pants suit. For most of human history, men's suits have included one pair of trousers. This has never made sense, because the cuffs of the trousers are always the first part of the suit to wear out. This helps explain why you often see men, especially in less prosperous neighborhoods, wearing ill-matched coats and pants. The reason is not taste but economics. The Depression was the one time this unhappy fact was faced, so that when your cuffs became frayed you could switch to your second pair of trousers and not have to try to match the blue plaid jacket with the brown striped pants. . . .

—*Charles Peters*

"I don't think anyone can read this book without having an urge to see national policy altered."
—Senator Paul Simon

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GARY ORFIELD and CAROLE ASHKINAZE

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–From the Foreword by Andrew Young

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Why Are Droves of Unqualified, Unprepared Kids Getting into Our Top Colleges?

Because their dads are alumni

by John Larew

Growing up, she heard a hundred Harvard stories. In high school, she put the college squarely in her sights. But when judgment day came in the winter of 1988, the Harvard admissions guys were frankly unimpressed. Her academic record was solid—not special. Extracurriculars, interview, recommendations? Above average, but not by much. "Nothing really stands out," one admissions officer scribbled on her application folder. Wrote another, "Harvard not really the right place."

At the hyperselective Harvard, where high school valedictorians, National Merit Scholarship finalists, musical prodigies—11,000 ambitious kids in all—are rejected annually, this young woman didn't seem to have much of a chance. Thanks to Harvard's largest affirmative action program, she got in anyway. No, she wasn't poor, black, disabled, Hispanic, native American, or even Aleutian. She got in because her mom went to Harvard.

Folk wisdom at Harvard holds that "Mother Harvard does not coddle her young." She sure treats her grandkids right, though. For more than 40 years, an astounding one-fifth of Harvard's students have received admissions preference because their parents attended the school. Today, these overwhelmingly affluent, white children of alumni—"legacies"—are three times more likely to be accepted to Harvard than high school kids who lack that handsome lineage.

Yalies, don't feel smug: Offspring of the Old Blue are two-and-a-half times more likely to be accepted than their unconnected peers. Dartmouth this year admitted 57 percent of its legacy applicants, compared to 27 percent of nonlegacies. At the University of Pennsylvania, 66 percent of legacies were admitted last year—thanks in part to an autonomous "office of alumni admissions" that actively lobbies for

John Larew, a former editorial chair of The Harvard Crimson, *graduates this month.*

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alumni children before the admissions committee. "One can argue that it's an accident, but it sure doesn't look like an accident," admits Yale Dean of Admissions Worth David.

If the legacies' big edge seems unfair to the tens of thousands who get turned away every year, Ivy League administrators have long defended the innocence of the legacy stat. Children of alumni are just smarter; they come from privileged backgrounds and tend to grow up in homes where parents encourage learning. That's what Harvard Dean of Admissions William Fitzsimmons told the campus newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*, when it first reported on the legacy preference last year. Departing Harvard President Derek Bok patiently explained that the legacy preference worked only as a "tie-breaking factor" between otherwise equally qualified candidates.

Since Ivy League admissions data is a notoriously classified commodity, when Harvard officials said in previous years that alumni kids were just better, you had to take them at their word. But then federal investigators came along and pried open those top-secret files. The Harvard guys were lying.

This past fall, after two years of study, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found that, far from being more qualified or even equally qualified, the average admitted legacy at Harvard between 1981 and 1988 was significantly *less* qualified than the average admitted nonlegacy. Examining admissions office ratings on academics, extracurriculars, personal qualities, recommendations, and other categories, the OCR concluded that "with the exception of the athletic rating, [admitted] nonlegacies scored better than legacies in *all* areas of comparison."

Exceptionally high admit rates, lowered academic standards, preferential treatment . . . hmmm. These sound like the cries heard in the growing fury over affirmative action for racial minorities in America's elite universities. Only no one is outraged about legacies.

➤In his recent book, *Preferential Policies*, Thomas Sowell argues that doling out special treatment encourages lackluster performance by the favored and resentment from the spurned. His far-ranging study flits from Malaysia to South Africa to American college campuses. Legacies don't merit a word.

➤Dinesh D'Souza, in his celebrated jeremiad *Illiberal Education*, blames affirmative action in college admissions for declining academic standards and increasing racial tensions. Lowered standards for minority applicants, he hints, may soon destroy the university as we know it. Lowered standards for legacies? The subject doesn't come up.

➤For all his polysyllabic complaints against preferential admissions, William F. Buckley Jr. (Yale '50) has never bothered to note that son Chris (Yale '75) got the benefit of a policy that more than doubled his chance of admission.

With so much silence on the subject, you'd be excused for thinking that in these enlightened times hereditary preferences are few and far between. But you'd be wrong. At most elite universities during the eighties, the legacy was by far the biggest piece of the preferential pie. At Harvard, a legacy is about twice as likely to be admitted as a black or Hispanic student. As sociologists Jerome Karabel and David Karen point out, if alumni children were admitted to Harvard at the same rate as other applicants, their numbers in the class of 1992 would have been reduced by about 200. Instead, those 200 marginally qualified legacies outnumbered all black, Mexican-American, native American, and Puerto Rican enrollees put together. If a few marginally qualified minorities are undermining Harvard's academic standards as much as conservatives charge, think about the damage all those legacies must be doing.

Mind you, colleges have the right to give the

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occasional preference—to bend the rules for the brilliant oboist or the world-class curler or the guy whose remarkable decency can't be measured by the SAT. (I happened to benefit from a geographical edge: It's easier to get into Harvard from West Virginia than from New England.) And until standardized tests and grade point average perfectly reflect the character, judgment, and drive of a student, tips like these aren't just nice, they're fair. Unfortunately, the extent of the legacy privilege in elite American colleges suggests something more than the occasional tie-breaking tip. Forget meritocracy. When 20 percent of Harvard's student body gets a legacy preference, aristocracy is the word that comes to mind.

A caste of thousands

If complaining about minority preferences is fashionable in the world of competitive colleges, bitching about legacies is just plain gauche, suggesting an unhealthy resentment of the privileged. But the effects of the legacy trickle down. For every legacy that wins, someone—usually someone less privileged—loses. And higher education is a high-stakes game.

High school graduates earn 59 percent of the income of four-year college graduates. Between high school graduates and alumni of prestigious colleges, the disparity is far greater. A *Fortune* study of American CEOs shows the usual suspects—graduates of Yale, Princeton, and Harvard—leading the list. A recent survey of the Harvard Class of 1940 found that 43 percent were worth more than $1 million. With some understatement, the report concludes, "A picture of highly advantageous circumstances emerges here, does it not, compared with American society as a whole?"

An Ivy League diploma doesn't necessarily mean a fine education. Nor does it guarantee future success. What it *does* represent is a big head start in the rat race—a fact Harvard will be the first to tell you. When I was a freshman, a counselor at the Office of Career Services instructed a group of us to make the Harvard name stand out on our resumes: "Underline it, boldface it, put it in capital letters."

Of course, the existence of the legacy preference in this fierce career competition isn't exactly news. According to historians, it was a direct result of the influx of Jews into the Ivy League during the twenties. Until then, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale had admitted anyone who could pass their entrance exams, but suddenly Jewish kids were outscoring the WASPs. So the schools began to use nonacademic criteria—"character," "solidity," and, eventually, lineage—to justify accepting low-scoring blue bloods over their peers. Yale implemented its legacy preference first, in 1925—spelling it out in a memo four years later: The school would admit "Yale sons of good character and reasonably good record . . . regardless of the number of applicants and the superiority of outside competitors." Harvard and Princeton followed shortly thereafter.

Despite its ignoble origins, the legacy preference has only sporadically come under fire, most notably in 1978's affirmative action decision, *University of California Board of Regents* v. *Bakke*. In his concurrence, Justice Harry Blackmun observed, "It is somewhat ironic to have us so deeply disturbed over a program where race is an element of consciousness, and yet to be aware of the fact, as we are, that institutions of higher learning . . . have given conceded preferences to the children of alumni."

If people are, in fact, aware of the legacy preference, why has it been spared the scrutiny given other preferential policies? One reason is public ignorance of the scope and scale of those preferences—an ignorance carefully cultivated by America's elite institutions. It's easy to maintain the fiction that your legacies get in strictly on merit as long as your admissions bureaucracy controls all access to student data. Information on Harvard's legacies became publicly available not because of any fit of disclosure by the university, but because a few civil rights types noted that the school had a suspiciously low rate of admission for Asian-Americans, who are statistically stronger than other racial groups in academics.

While the ensuing OCR inquiry found no evidence of illegal racial discrimination by Harvard, it did turn up some embarrassing information about how much weight the "legacy" label gives an otherwise flimsy file. Take these comments scrawled by admissions officers on applicant folders:

➤"Double lineage who chose the right parents."

➤"Dad's [deleted] connections signify lineage of more than usual weight. That counted into the equation makes this a case which (assuming positive TRs [teacher recommendations] and Alum IV [alumnus interview]) is well worth doing."

➤"Lineage is main thing."

➤"Not quite strong enough to get the clean tip."

➤"Classical case that would be hard to explain to dad."

➤"Double lineage but lots of problems."

➤"Not a great profile, but just strong enough #'s and grades to get the tip from lineage."

➤"Without lineage, there would be little case. With it, we'll keep looking."

In every one of these cases, the applicant was admitted.

Of course, Harvard's not doing anything other schools aren't. The practice of playing favorites with

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alumni children is nearly universal among private colleges and isn't unheard of at public institutions, either. The rate of admission for Stanford's alumni children is "almost twice the general population," according to a spokesman for the admissions office. Notre Dame reserves 25 percent of each freshman class for legacies. At the University of Virginia, where native Virginians make up two-thirds of each class, alumni children are automatically treated as Virginians even if they live out of state—giving them a whopping competitive edge. The same is true of the University of California at Berkeley. At many schools, Harvard included, all legacy applications are guaranteed a read by the dean of admissions himself—a privilege nonlegacies don't get.

Little white Elis

Like the Harvard deans, officials at other universities dismiss the statistical disparities by pointing to the superior environmental influences found in the homes of their alums. "I bet that, statistically, [legacy qualifications are] a little above average, but not by much," says Paul Killebrew, associate director of admissions at Dartmouth. "The admitted group [of legacies] would look exactly like the profile of the class."

James Wickenden, a former dean of admissions at Princeton who now runs a college consulting firm, suspects otherwise. Wickenden wrote of "one Ivy League university" where the average combined SAT score of the freshman class was 1,350 out of a possible 1,600, compared to 1,280 for legacies. "At most selective schools, [legacy status] doubles, even trebles the chances of admission," he says. Many colleges even place admitted legacies in a special "Not in Profile" file (along with recruited athletes and some minority students), so that when the school's SAT scores are published, alumni kids won't pull down the average.

How do those kids fare once they're enrolled? No one's telling. Harvard, for one, refuses to keep any records of how alumni children stack up academically against their nonlegacy classmates—perhaps because the last such study, in 1956, showed Harvard sons hogging the bottom of the grade curve.

If the test scores of admitted legacies are a mystery, the reason colleges accept so many is not. They're afraid the alumni parents of rejected children will stop giving to the colleges' unending fundraising campaigns. "Our survival as an institution depends on having support from alumni," says Richard Steele, director of undergraduate admissions at Duke University, "so according advantages to alumni kids is just a given."

In fact, the OCR exonerated Harvard's legacy preference precisely because legacies bring in money. (OCR cited a federal district court ruling that a state university could favor the children of out-of-state alumni because "defendants showed that the alumni provide monetary support for the university.") And there's no question that alumni provide significant support to Harvard: Last year, they raised $20 million for the scholarship fund alone.

In a letter to OCR defending his legacies, Harvard's Fitzsimmons painted a grim picture of a school where the preference did not exist—a place peeved alumni turned their backs on when their kids failed to make the cut. "Without the fundraising activities of alumni," Fitzsimmons warned darkly, "Harvard could not maintain many of its programs, including needs-blind admissions."

Many colleges even place admitted legacies in a special "Not in Profile" file, so that when the school's SAT scores are published, alumni kids won't pull down the average.

Ignoring, for the moment, the question of how "needs-blind" a system is that admits one-fifth of each class on the assumption that, hey, their parents might give us money, Fitzsimmons's defense doesn't quite ring true. The "Save the Scholarship Fund" line is a variation on the principle of "Firemen First," whereby bureaucrats threatened with a budget cut insist that essential programs rather than executive perks and junkets will be the first to be slashed. Truth be told, there is just about nothing that Harvard, the richest university in the world, could do to jeopardize needs-blind admissions, provided that it placed a high enough priority on them.

But even more unclear is how closely alumni giving is related to the acceptance of alumni kids. "People whose children are denied admission are initially upset," says Wickenden, "and maybe for a year or two their interest in the university wanes. But typically they come back around when they see that what happened was best for the kids." Wickenden has put his money where his mouth is: He rejected two sons of a Princeton trustee involved in a $420 million fundraising project, not to mention the child of a board member who managed the school's $2 billion endowment, all with no apparent ill effect.

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Most university administrators would be loathe to take such a chance, despite a surprising lack of evidence of the legacy/largess connection. Fitzsimmons admits Harvard knows of no empirical research to support the claim that diminishing legacies would decrease alumni contributions, relying instead on "hundreds, perhaps thousands of conversations with alumni whose sons and daughters applied."

No doubt some of Fitzsimmons's anxiety is founded: It's only natural for alumni to want their kids to have the same privileges they did. But the historical record suggests that alumni are far more tolerant than administrators realize. Admit women and blacks? *Well, we would,* said administrators earlier this century—*but the alumni just won't have it.* Fortunately for American universities, the bulk of those alumni turned out to be less craven than administrators thought they'd be. As more blacks and women enrolled over the past two decades, the funds kept pouring in, reaching an all-time high in the eighties.

Another significant historical lesson can be drawn from the late fifties, when Harvard's selectiveness increased dramatically. As the number of applications soared, the rate of admission for legacies began declining from about 90 percent to its current 43 percent. Administration anxiety rose inversely, but Harvard's fundraising machine has somehow survived. That doesn't mean there's *no* correlation between alumni giving and the legacy preference, obviously; rather, it means that the people who would withhold their money at the loss of the legacy privilege were far outnumbered by other givers. "It takes time to get the message out," explains Fitzsimmons, "but eventually people start responding. We've had to make the case [for democratization] to alumni, and I think that they generally feel good about that."

Heir cut

When justice dictates that ordinary kids should have as fair a shot as the children of America's elite, couldn't Harvard and its sister institutions trouble themselves to "get the message out" again? Of course they could. But virtually no one—liberal or conservative—is pushing them to do so.

"There must be no goals or quotas for any special group or category of applicants," reads an advertisement in the right-wing *Dartmouth Review*. "Equal opportunity must be the guiding policy. Males, females, blacks, whites, Native Americans, Hispanics . . . can all be given equal chance to matriculate, survive, and prosper based solely on individual performance."

Noble sentiments from the Ernest Martin Hopkins Institute, an organization of conservative Dartmouth alumni. Reading on, though, we find these "concerned alumni" aren't sacrificing *their* young to the cause. "Alumni sons and daughters," notes the ad further down, "should receive some special consideration."

Similarly, Harvard's conservative *Salient* has twice in recent years decried the treatment of Asian-Americans in admissions, but it attributes their misfortune to favoritism for blacks and Hispanics. What about legacy university favoritism—a much bigger factor? *Salient* writers have twice endorsed it.

What's most surprising is the indifference of minority activists. With the notable exception of a few vocal Asian-Americans, most have made peace with the preference for well-off whites.

Mecca Nelson, the president of Harvard's Black Students Association, leads rallies for the hiring of more minority faculty. She participated in an illegal sit-in at an administration building in support of Afro-American studies. But when it comes to the policy that Asian-American activist Arthur Hu calls "a 20-percent-white quota," Nelson says, "I don't have any really strong opinions about it. I'm not very clear on the whole legacy issue at all."

Joshua Li, former co-chair of Harvard's Asian-American Association, explains his complacency differently: "We understand that in the future Asian-American students will receive these tips as well."

At America's elite universities, you'd expect a somewhat higher standard of fairness than that—especially when money is the driving force behind the concept. And many Ivy League types *do* advocate for more just and lofty ideals. One of them, as it happens, is Derek Bok. In one of Harvard's annual reports, he warned that the modern university is slowly turning from a truth-seeking enterprise into a money-grubbing corporation—at the expense of the loyalty of its alums. "Such an institution may still evoke pride and respect because of its intellectual achievements," he said rightly. "But the feelings it engenders will not be quite the same as those produced by an institution that is prepared to forgo income, if need be, to preserve values of a nobler kind."

Forgo income to preserve values of a nobler kind—it's an excellent idea. Embrace the preferences for the poor and disadvantaged. Wean alumni from the idea of the legacy edge. And above all, stop the hypocrisy that begrudges the great unwashed a place at Harvard while happily making room for the less qualified sons and daughters of alums.

After 70 years, it won't be easy to wrest the legacy preference away from the alums. But the long-term payoff is as much a matter of message as money. When the sons and daughters of today's college kids fill out *their* applications, the legacy preference should seem not a birthright, but a long-gone relic from the Ivy League's inequitable past. □

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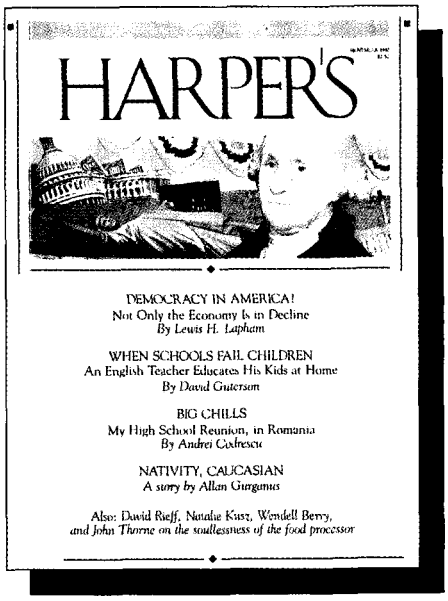

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Hack in the USSR

Taking dictation, clipping Kissinger's columns, feigning allegiance, and other noble pursuits of one of Gorbachev's ace reporters

by Maxim Kniazkov

The editor shook his head in disappointment. "No, it won't work. We are not in the business of writing diaries here. The story should be more politically aggressive, more pathetic, if you wish."

He fished his pen out from under the pile of Reuters and Agence-France dispatches and newspaper clippings, bent over my neatly typed story, and started to write between the lines. *"In his speech the head of the Rhodesian racist regime, Ian Smith, called upon his military to kill everyone who would be suspected of sympathy toward the patriotic guerrilla fighters."*

I looked at him in surprise. "Wait a minute—Smith didn't say that. He said he would be firm in defending law and order in Rhodesia, but there was nothing in his speech about killing civilians."

The boss looked at me the way a corporal inspects a virgin draftee. "That's what he had in mind," he said impatiently. "Always try to remember: We are engaged in an ideological war. We cannot work with white gloves on."

It was my first lesson in journalism, and I was learning from a master: Vladimir Alekseevich Korochantsev, chief of the African Desk of the Soviet news agency TASS. I had prepared myself for harsh criticism of my phraseology and word choice; I didn't know a thing about white gloves. But over the next 10 years, from Africa to Paris to Washington and back to Moscow, I would learn the craft from the best journalists in the Soviet Union—men whose skills had nothing to do with curiosity or resourcefulness and everything to do with the subtleties of making propaganda. Like that of his peers, Korochantsev's talent was knowing exactly how to navigate the stormy and treacherous waters of Soviet journalism, where a single mistake could sink your career without a trace.

Maxim Kniazkov edits a newsletter for The Beard Group, Inc. in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

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Every young college or university graduate who goes to work for TASS is first taught to correctly answer one question: "Is the general public supposed to know about that?" It's a difficult science to learn, because it depends so heavily on one's political intuition. Yet decades of practical work had helped Korochantsev develop a perfect sense of what his bosses would like to see in his stories; he never disappointed them. Under his tutelage, I, too, honed that special sense. For a long time, it served me well.

In recent months, glasnost and perestroika haven't had the same ring to them. But as a journalist under four Soviet leaders—Gorbachev, Chernenko, Andropov, and Brezhnev—I never quite bought the idea of a new, improved Soviet Union. A nation's journalism is, obviously, a bellwether of that nation's freedom. And despite the democratic talk, knowledge in the Soviet Union today is still an exclusive privilege of the Moscow elite—just so much caviar and sturgeon. My job as a journalist for TASS? To make sure that privilege *stayed* exclusive.

It's 11 p.m. in Washington, D.C., and 15th Street is virtually deserted, save the unmarked car of a Soviet official parked outside the entrance of *The Washington Post*. Suddenly, a man steps out of the car, grabs tomorrow's paper, and rushes away. He will be back—same place, same time—tomorrow.

This is reporting, Soviet-style, and the driver is a TASS correspondent. Paper in hand, he will hurry back to his warren at the National Press Building to begin his night of work. One of the chief priorities of any young Soviet journalist is to learn which *Post* news items are supposed to run on the TASS wire and which are to be delivered in sealed envelopes to certain Soviet officials.

He clips out the most important articles and sends them by fax to Moscow. Next, he summarizes the contents of the paper in a three- or four-page review, in Russian, and attaches the report to his clippings. Tomorrow, you will not find this summary in any newspaper in the USSR. Instead, it will appear in a classified TASS news bulletin, "cleaned" by editors of all quotations judged to be anti-Soviet and then circulated by couriers around Moscow and certain other parts of the country. The *Post*'s editorials and front-page articles will be parsed at the Communist party headquarters, the foreign and defense ministries, the KGB, and in dozens of other government institutions. The man on the street, of course, won't be informed enough to know what he's missing.

What is done by TASS in Washington is repeated on a daily basis in New York, London, Paris, Bonn, Tokyo, and other foreign capitals. Newspaper and magazine articles sent overnight to Moscow are followed by parliamentary reports and transcripts of speeches by heads of state and foreign ministers. The motto of TASS's intricate system for the dissemination of information could be: *Let the right people know what they need to know. And only that.*

I spent from 1983 to 1987 at the New York and D.C. TASS bureaus, a cog in a complicated system of political information that's at least as old as Stalin. Although its foundation was probably laid in the final years of Lenin's life, the rationale for such elaborate secrecy is timeless. Knowledge and ignorance have always been important factors in the politics of any country; the well-informed always have a significant advantage over the less-informed. Presidents and high-level officials intuitively understand this—which is why, even with glasnost, Soviet information is so jealously and nervously guarded.

As all young journalists are carefully instructed, how a *Post* or *Times* article is to be published or summarized depends wholly on

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the sensitivity of the information to the Soviet Union. The clipping of every article involves an act of political judgment. Into the "A" bulletin—the paper with the largest circulation—goes the harmless information: generalized stories about world events that have nothing whatsoever to do with the Soviet Union, or at least nothing unflattering or political. A newsman knows that anything remotely critical of Soviet policies could never go into the A, because among the institutions allowed to receive it, one could find middle-level government offices, research institutes, and even the embassies of countries that, at least until recently, were regarded as "fraternal."

What those midlevel bureaucrats and researchers miss aren't critical military documents and KGB staff lists. They're the op-eds of Richard Perle and the writings of Marshall Goldman and other "Sovietologists" who criticize the Soviet leadership. For these hot properties, there is a special bulletin called, at least until this year, "AD." AD is a compendium of articles and documents either criticizing Soviet policies or containing facts perceived to be detrimental to Soviet prestige—a category that includes virtually everything by Henry Kissinger, whose analyses are especially despised by the Kremlin; all the evil-empire rhetoric of former president Ronald Reagan; and columns by Jack Anderson, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, and George Will. More recently, those regular authors were joined by Boris Yeltsin and the leaders of the Baltic and other rebellious republics, who, in their interviews with the foreign press, do not sweeten their characterizations of Moscow's policies.

But some of the most closely monitored writers in the USSR are not the Kissingers and Perles. In my last months of work for TASS, many articles by Bill Gertz, *The Washington Times*'s national security correspondent, turned up solely in the AD. The Soviet leaders were apparently interested in the information provided by his numerous contacts within the intelligence community, but didn't want that information widely publicized.

The number of people cleared by the Moscow leadership to read AD's nasty and informative newsbytes is relatively tiny: the senior functionaries of the foreign policy departments of the Central Committee of the Communist party, major ministries, and newspapers. The AD is never sold to foreigners—who in this case include party officials outside Moscow.

Glasnost or no glasnost, misclassification is one of the biggest mistakes a Soviet journalist can make. When I returned to Moscow after a tour of duty as a TASS correspondent in the United States, I found the foreign editor irritated. "The director general has just given him hell," one of my colleagues explained. "*The Philadelphia Inquirer* ran an article alleging a conflict between Gorbachev and Ligachev in the Politburo. We translated it, and someone sent it to the A instead of the AD by mistake. Ligachev was fuming. He called the director general and accused him of trying to develop a rift between the members of the Politburo."

I was surprised by the viciousness of the charge.

"Yes," my colleague nodded, "because too many people may read it in the A—even foreigners. Ligachev feared that they could interpret the very fact that the article appeared in the bulletin as TASS's silent endorsement of these allegations."

There is some information with which even senior functionaries are not trusted. Newspaper stories about Raisa's shopping sprees in London, Paris, and Reykjavik; allegations about Gorbachev's new dachas; and reports about the poor performance of Soviet forces in Afghanistan and all KGB activities are to be found only in the bulletin called *Nulevka*—"Zero." It is edited behind the steel doors of TASS's First Department and compiled by the foreign editor and his deputies; no one of lower rank ever lays eyes on the galleys. Its subscribers are assumed to be limited to no more than a few dozen high-level functionaries.

The reason for such caution is obvious. This bulletin concerns the behavior and decisions of the president and his entourage—in other words, it contains information that could be used to weaken Gorbachev. Last year, after five years of glasnost, there was discussion in TASS about declassifying at least some of the bulletins. But the order from the top was not to touch the *Nulevka*. The leaders of perestroika didn't want to take chances.

The red phone

The telephone rang at my desk in Moscow shortly before 10 a.m. The ring was mild and melodic, but it made my guts tighten. It was coming from the ivory-colored phone with the insignia of the Soviet Union on the dial—a government communications phone. Only the highest officials in the party, or the *nomenklatura*, had the right to use it. I picked up the receiver.

"This is Zamiatin," cracked the voice on the other end of the line. "Tell me, my friend, what's new in the world?" It was Sunday, and the chief of the international information department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), now ambassador to Great Britain, was calling from his Moscow apartment. I started to read to him from the summary of international news that had been prepared and left to us by the night shift.

"What?" he interrupted me somewhere in the middle. "The U.S. Congress has allocated new money for

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Afghani *dushmans*? You should write this story in the following way. . . ."

I had just enough time to switch on the imported tape recorder, bought by TASS with hard currency especially for such occasions. Zamiatin's style was well known. He began to dictate offhandedly, without even reading the agencies' reports from Washington or going into tiresome details. His sentences were stuffed with expressions like "imperialist conspiracy" and "undeclared war." When he finally finished, he coughed and ordered in a terse voice: "Send a telegram saying that this story is for obligatory publication in *Pravda*. What else have you got there?"

I told him that there had been rallies protesting price increases and lowered standards of living in several West European countries. "We are planning to make a good summary out of these reports," I added, thinking that Zamiatin would be pleased with our initiative—another installment of "Capitalist Countries Gone to Hell." I was stunned when I heard a flat "no" from the receiver.

"Don't touch this subject at all," he ordered. "Not today, not in the following weeks. And tell your colleagues that the protests against the deterioration of living conditions in the West won't see the light of day in our press for a certain period of time."

A few days later, the reason for this strange instruction became clear. The Soviet government had just raised the prices of furs, jewelry, radios, home appliances, and some other important items. It didn't want even the idea of protests in the air.

What happened that Sunday in 1981 was a perfect example of how the Soviet leadership controls and directs the press. Later, when I worked at the African Desk, a Mr. Shubin, who oversaw Africa from the Central Committee of the Soviet Union headquarters, used to call the desk two or three times a week to give us instructions. What has changed since Gorbachev came to power? Nothing essential. As far as I know, Shubin still calls, although probably not as often as before. Stories are still dictated to TASS, if not as often as before. And at crucial moments, Gorbachev's team acts the same as its less liberal-tongued predecessors.

Pinko slips

A story overheard in the corridors of TASS:

In the late seventies, then Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev arrived on an official visit to Bulgaria. He stepped off the plane and into the most festive welcome imaginable—flags, portraits, music, flowers, and a warm embrace with then-Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov. Soviet television carried the welcoming ceremony live. All the major Western news agencies were also running stories about the event. But TASS, which was supposed to carry the news about Brezhnev's arrival first, was silent, as if the Soviet leader had not arrived in Sofia at all.

Gloomy is probably not the right word to describe the mood that reigned at the TASS foreign desk in Moscow at that moment. The editor and his deputies were glued in bewilderment to a TV set showing Brezhnev's motorcade in the colorfully decorated streets of the Bulgarian capital. But still there was no word from TASS. It was TASS's moment—and TASS missed it.

Publicly, Gorbachev was advocating multiparty democracy. But behind closed doors, nobody would be approved for foreign travel without those all-important words: "Politically educated, morally balanced. Relations in the family are good."

A few hours later, Moscow learned the cause of this scandalous delay. It turned out that the bureau chief in Sofia had permitted himself some freedom in the wording of the draft story. As a result, a Brezhnev aide killed it at once; the reporter had to rewrite the dispatch, catch the aide somewhere in the corridors of the official residence, and finally get his clearance before the new version could be put on the wire.

Of course, not all TASS stories are dictated or delivered by courier. Most of the time, journalists are forced to type their *own* words into TASS's slick European computers—an exercise fraught with peril. No story about the activities of high-level officials can be published without prior approval. Not a single word from a leader's speeches may be dropped, not a remark omitted. All the dignitaries surrounding Gorbachev are to be mentioned in specific order, according to their rank. And TASS has a series of standardized clichés for official arrivals, talks, state dinners, and departures.

"The general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the president of the USSR, _____, left today on an official visit to _____. On his trip he is being accompanied by _____. At the Vnukovo airport, he was bid farewell by _____ and other officials."

Every dispatch about the president's departures

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must be written this way; the TASS reporter is expected to know which dignitaries should be mentioned by name and title and which may be embraced by the impersonal "and other officials." A mistake here can cost a TASS reporter his career. In 1983, the foreign desk supervisor, Nikolai Pozdniakov, was demoted for three months after airing a dispatch in which Yuri Andropov was named "the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU" instead of "the general secretary." The TASS correspondent at the UN who had written the story was severely reprimanded.

Since one has to know so many titles and phrases by heart, writing about the president and other dignitaries has become sort of a separate profession in Soviet journalism—TASS maintains a separate desk, supervised by Ludmila Shvedova, to oversee copy on state occasions. But such special training does not mean that Soviet journalists gain the trust of Soviet officials. Everything they write must always be cleared with the official's press aide. This job is usually done by Anatoly Chernyaev for President Gorbachev and by Vitaly Churkin for the foreign minister. The defense minister, Dmitri Yazov, has his own people to clear all press reports.

Despite all the talk about "glasnost" and "freedom of the press," Gorbachev has left this practice unchanged. Full transcripts of his speeches and street conversations must be made and presented for his vetting. This process costs a fortune, but he doesn't seem to care. Transmitted live by television, Gorbachev's press conferences are recorded on VCRs in Moscow. Professional typists make transcripts that are then faxed to whatever city Gorbachev is visiting, for the sole purpose of showing them to Gorbachev's aide and getting his clearance.

The costs are even greater for major newspapers, which must be ready to print at 10 p.m. Moscow time. Printers are routinely ordered to wait until the report about Gorbachev's activities is cleared. The newspaper delivery system, which relies heavily on trains and airplanes, is crumbling throughout the country. Losses are counted in hundreds of thousands of rubles. But the president clearly believes his personal image is more important than public money.

This problem was raised several times during a meeting between Gorbachev and Soviet newspaper editors. He listened to their complaints attentively, but when asked to scrap the system of prior approvals, some editors present recall that his answer was immediate: "No." Government newspapers, after all, can be very useful tools for a president to have on hand.

In February 1990, around the same time as the editors' meeting, TASS came under fire from the opposition forces for publishing a typically biased story about a huge rally in Moscow. The participants were labeled "extremists" trying to "destabilize the country."

The day after the story ran, angry demonstrators gathered at the entrance of TASS in Moscow, accusing the journalists of being liars. What they didn't know was that TASS had nothing to do with the version of the story that appeared in the press. The report was simply delivered to TASS in a sealed envelope from the party's Central Committee. According to one informed source, it came directly from the office of Vadim Medvedev, then a member of the Politburo and the main party ideologue. Medvedev edited the story the way he saw fit. Another well-placed source pointed out that Medvedev, known for rarely taking the initiative himself, had served only as an intermediary between TASS and an even "more important official." It's not hard to figure out who in the Soviet hierarchy is more important than a member of the Politburo, and thus who the real author of the story was.

This situation existed under Stalin, and Khrushchev, and Brezhnev, and Andropov. Some of these leaders were tougher than others, but on the whole the picture is unchanged. As for Gorbachev, it seemed to me that from the beginning he had been very careful to shield some areas of Soviet political life from his own perestroika.

The paper chase

One of my American friends presumed recently, "After having worked three years as a foreign correspondent in Washington and New York, you must have a lot of contacts here."

"God, no! Absolutely none!" I replied.

What did I need them for? For a TASS journalist, flesh-and-blood sources are a headache.

Contacts require a lot of time. Why go out and make them if American newspapers and TV throw more information at you than you can possibly digest? And besides, the Soviet news agency doesn't trust anything that isn't already written on paper or recorded on a VCR. No matter how important the information a source promises, TASS never takes the responsibility of disseminating it on its open wires. Instead, it quotes newspapers, other agencies, and TV reports—only things that have already been printed or aired somewhere. It's safer that way.

This is not, of course, an especially enlightening approach: TASS is doomed to remain an eternal distributor of secondhand information. But the alternative—a journalistic high-wire act—appeals very little to a bureaucrat, and TASS is the consummate Soviet bureaucracy.

For proof of TASS's bureaucracy, I need only re-

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call one week of work in Mozambique. The local bureau of the Novosti press agency, the Soviet version of the U.S. Information Agency, managed to get a long article about the involvement of American corporations in illegal trade with South Africa published in *Noticias da Beira*, the second-largest newspaper in Mozambique.

"Make a story out of this," TASS bureau chief Alexander Osipov told me, handing over the newspaper clipping. "But don't mention the Novosti," he said. "Attribute it to *Noticias da Beira*."

I knew what lay behind his order. TASS would never run a story originating from Novosti and would definitely prefer quotations from a foreign source. So I did what I was told.

The story returned to Mozambique via the TASS wire and was picked up by *Noticias*, the *largest* national newspaper. It was published in full, but the article never mentioned TASS—Samora Machel's government didn't want to publicize its growing dependence on the Soviet Union.

My boss clipped it out and handed it to me—he wanted me to write the very same story again. I stared at him in disbelief.

"Don't worry," the bureau chief comforted me. "Keep it for a few days and then send it again with a new lead."

An outsider would never have understood his logic. But I knew he was simply trying to build up the number of articles sent that week to Moscow. Back there, quantity was the chief criterion for evaluating correspondents' work.

Like so many other Soviet agencies, TASS is a self-serving, bureaucratic organization that cares much less about producing news than about justifying its own existence. It produces tons of paper; its teletypes work 24 hours a day. But hardly any attention is paid to what is actually on the wire. TASS correspondents are not expected to surprise the world with sensational news; they are expected to impress their bosses with a sensational amount of paperwork. Sitting at your desk and clipping papers, you will be able to produce two stories, while someone doing "street reporting" will have the time to write only one. And because, in the end, quantity determines everything, ultimately you will be the winner.

Until recently, the TASS bureau in Washington, D.C., was one of the few exceptions to the Soviet secretarial school of journalism. TASS correspondents there actually left their desks, heading off to the State and Defense departments and to the U.S. Congress. Of course, they weren't pursuing interviews or investigations; they were after transcripts or copies of reports. But the creation a few years ago of the Federal News Service, which sends transcripts directly to embassies and news bureaus, ended even that small adventure. My colleagues returned to their beloved desk-bound lifestyle.

Grave thoughts

Sometimes, though, even TASS correspondents need to call someone for a quote. When leaders of the USSR unveil a new peace proposal, or the Soviet president makes a major speech, they love to show the Soviet public the positive reaction of the West. When that reaction is not as enthusiastic as the Soviet leaders wish it to be, it must be artificially produced.

That's why every Soviet foreign correspondent maintains a stable of people who can give a positive interview at any moment, day or night. In the U.S., these sources consist mostly of members of the Communist party, the U.S. Peace Council, and various labor and antiwar organizations—for instance, New York City's National Council of American-Soviet Friendship and a few local chapters of SANE/FREEZE. Some liberal writers and scientists, like Kurt Vonnegut and Nobel prize-winning scientist George Wald, are often quite supportive of Soviet foreign policy initiatives.

Sometimes Moscow's urgent requests for positive reactions create unlikely situations, like the one described by a former colleague in New Delhi. In the seventies, TASS kept a member of the Indian Academy of Sciences in its interview stable. The academician gave TASS so many positive interviews, he apparently lost track of what he had told whom, when—and he didn't really seem to care.

One night, when the TASS bureau in New Delhi needed to provide a positive response to a Brezhnev speech on very short notice, it decided to "compile" an interview from some of his previous statements. The interview was quickly circulated by TASS wires all over the world. The next morning, a TASS correspondent called the old scientist to thank him for his longstanding cooperation.

"I am sorry, you cannot speak to my boss," the academician's secretary replied. "He died about three weeks ago."

Sworn to party

"Congratulations, young man! Now you are all set, and I hope we'll get a number of good stories from you when you are abroad. . . ."

The secretary of the Party Committee smiled and, rising from his armchair, handed me a brand new red card, which bore on its cover the profile of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, founder of the Soviet state. The words below, printed in black, read: "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

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It was not by chance that new job opportunities were mentioned at this ceremony, which formally had nothing to do with journalism. According to internal regulations enacted for the Soviet press long ago, membership in the Communist party is a requirement for anyone who wants to be considered for a position as a foreign correspondent.

I knew the editor-in-chief wanted to send me to the United States. The party secretary knew it too. He also knew that this was the reason I was standing so earnestly before him, and he probably guessed that deep in my mind I wouldn't give a dime for a dozen Marxist ideas. In all probability, neither would he. At the same time, we both knew the rules of the game. We tried to follow them meticulously.

Thanks to the pro-central government articles that run on the TASS wires, it is customary in the West to label the agency as conservative, one of the pillars of the Communist old guard. But Western analysts may be oversimplifying the issue. Having spent 13 years in TASS, I know what many of the agency's journalists really think. True, there are a number of hard-line conservatives on staff, but the majority is very sympathetic to the reform movement. Even here, it seems, you can sense a "liberal" bias to the press.

Yes, it sometimes feels morally bankrupt to work in the big media of the USSR and be asked to do exactly the opposite of what you think is right. But Soviet journalists do it for bread. I have no doubt the same mixed emotions pervade the ranks of the armed forces and the KGB—the two institutions the West thinks of as the guardians of Soviet conservatism. The generals probably *are* conservative: They stand to lose everything if the regime changes. But the lumpenprole may harbor very different—and unvoiced—ideas about what the Soviet Union needs.

My own induction into the party took place in the fall of 1983, since, perestroika or no perestroika, membership in the Communist party still opens the right doors. It is the key to the Moscow elite. This fact protects the party from disintegrating entirely, fading out of the political scene in these grim times: People need party membership. As we say in Russia, it makes their loaf of bread thicker and sweeter.

I, of course, could claim no higher motives. "Didn't you know about all these dreadful things happening in the Soviet press?" people ask me now. "And if you knew, why did you join TASS?"

Of course I knew. I joined TASS for the same reason that, each year, hundreds of the best graduates in international affairs dream of joining the bureaucratized foreign ministry or the fearful KGB. They're not in love with these agencies, but they understand that only these jobs can offer an interesting and lucrative career—one that may even take them out of the USSR.

Sure, you could become a correspondent on the foreign desk somewhere in *The Moscow News* and never set foot outside the Soviet Union. But in TASS, Novosti, *Pravda*, *Isvestia*, and a couple of other newspapers you could be posted abroad for *years*, getting your salary in dollars. The choice? There hardly was one—which is why I became a card-carrying member of the party that day in 1983.

"Please describe your party activities, young man," ordered a woman who worked at the TASS canteen. Though she knew virtually nothing about journalism, she was a member of the party committee inside TASS. She had a say in the appointments of foreign correspondents.

I told her I was a member of the People's Control Group that helped the administration enforce discipline in the offices. She was apparently satisfied. "How is the atmosphere in your family?" another official bluntly asked—broaching an equally critical issue.

There is a rule in the USSR that everyone going to work abroad has to be married and accompanied by a spouse. It is more strictly applied to men because of a widespread belief in Soviet security agencies that, after a year of solitary life, a healthy adult male becomes so horny that he is open to recruitment by attractive females employed by hostile intelligence agencies.

It always seemed to me that if a journalist decided to become a spy, he'd do it for better reasons than pleasing his American girlfriend. On the other hand, the marriage requirement brings a lot of mercantilism into the family lives of the Soviet foreign service. Some marriages exist only on paper—as a means to foreign travel and hard currency. I didn't, of course, offer my views on the subject at the time. "Everything's OK," I replied.

After 10 minutes of screening by party activists, key phrases were added to my resume: "Politically educated, morally balanced. Relations in the family

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are good." My appointment was endorsed by the party. It was a green light to my career.

Of course, it takes a lot more than party membership and good marital status to become a foreign correspondent in the USSR. One has to learn to build the right connections and show loyalty to the right people—for instance, influential sponsors who can present your case to the decision-making bosses.

Professional performance counts, but it is the least important criterion in selecting journalists for overseas positions. The jobs are simply too lucrative to be given to just anyone. No matter where he is, a foreign correspondent has access to goods and a lifestyle an ordinary Soviet citizen cannot even imagine. Although the salary isn't big ($942 a month in the U.S.), the agency pays for housing, covers medical costs, and provides a company car. Compared to the USSR, that is the good life. A foreign assignment is the ultimate plum.

Because these jobs are so coveted, control over them gives TASS officials enormous political leverage in the USSR. The eighties were marked at TASS by the rule of the "American mafia"—a group of former American bureau heads that coalesced around Sergei Losev, the former New York bureau chief, after he became the agency's director general. Soon after his promotion, he began building his power base by promoting friends from TASS's bureaus in the U.S. By the end of the decade, five men from the "American mafia" were sitting at the Collegium of TASS, the supreme body of the agency. All four deputies to the foreign editor also came from the American clan. It didn't take long for people to realize that the way to good positions lay in American bureau connections.

I worked as a correspondent in D.C. and New York until 1987, when I was called back to be chief supervisor of TASS's foreign desk in Moscow. If that sounded like a promotion, it wasn't. My connections were clearly second-tier.

While I waited and hoped for another long-term American assignment, I comforted myself with brief reporting trips abroad, covering the Soviet-American Peace Walk in 1988 and visiting Finland in 1989. Before leaving on even these brief assignments, I was summoned to take the loyalty oath at TASS. Like so many others paraded before the committee, I became the good Marxist hard at work in Moscow—the good Marxist dying to get away.

Writing wrongs

In April 1990, I attended a party hearing for the last time in my life. Publicly, perestroika was in full swing, and Gorbachev was advocating multiparty democracy. But behind closed doors, nobody but Communist officials would be approved for foreign travel without those all-important words: "Politically educated, morally balanced. Relations in the family are good."

If in 1990 perestroika seemed barely to impinge on Soviet society as a whole, TASS seemed to be restructuring in the opposite direction. This was one reason why, as I made my last solemn testimony before the party, I was preparing to leave.

By the end of the eighties, the political polarization of Soviet society had become too obvious to ignore. The leadership of TASS sided with the conservatives, who started using the agency in their attacks against the reformist movement. Against my will, I found myself on the wrong side of the barricade.

To be honest, though, my objections to the newly militant TASS were as practical as they were philosophical. I didn't think—and still don't—that snuggling up to the hard-liners was a wise political move for TASS: Sooner or later the reformists will overcome because they have the only viable political and economic philosophy in the Soviet Union. And after coming to power, they will clean out the KGB, the military—and TASS. I had no intention of waiting for this moment.

Yet there was another reason for escaping, one that had nothing to do with politics. As the Soviet economy rapidly deteriorated, the value of jobs abroad—already high—became stratospheric. By the beginning of the nineties, everyone—and not just journalists—was obsessed with getting away. Being at the Foreign Desk of TASS had become tantamount to standing in a long line to buy furniture. Only here, the competition was tougher.

So many high-level officials began claiming foreign slots for their relatives and friends that at some point, I understood: Despite my credentials, I didn't have a chance. I decided to leave TASS and relocate to the United States on my own.

Three years ago, I was a senior official at TASS. Today, I write a corporate newsletter and live in Maryland. Americans often ask me if I miss TASS; the answer is always no. Not the pointless bureaucracy. Not the official dictations. The oaths. The endless clippings. The glasnost I dutifully reported but never really felt in my heart.

Like all other veteran Soviet journalists, I was an expert at propaganda—I was trained by the finest in the world. By now, I have learned to recognize the work of masters. And here in Bethesda, watching American TV, reading American papers, I sometimes have to wonder: Might all this talk of Soviet glasnost in the *American* press be the result of just another propaganda campaign? And suddenly, I can hear the Washington journalists at their desks, snipping and clipping away. □

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WHO'S WHO

So who leaked the embarrassing information about **John Sununu**'s globetrotting practices to *The Washington Post* and *U.S. News & World Report*, which carried published accounts on the same day? Most fingers point to Rep. **John Conyers**. . . .

Washingtonians applauded when they first learned that **Dennis E. Kloske**, the undersecretary of Commerce for export administration, had publicly criticized the Bush administration for ignoring warnings that it should limit the export of American technology to Iraq before the invasion of Kuwait. Their admiration of his courage deepened as it was reported that Sununu had ordered Kloske dismissed because of his whistle-blowing. But cynics pointed out that before Kloske blew the whistle, he had arranged a lucrative outside job. In other words, instead of being a profile in courage, he was another example of that venerable Washington phenomenon, Lame Duck Guts. . . .

The administration insiders chosen to attend the first strategy meeting for the 1992 campaign were Sununu, **Andrew Card**, **Ron Kaufman**, **Ed Rogers**, **Richard Darman**, **Robert Mosbacher**, **Frederic Malek**, **Charles Black**, **Robert Teeter**, and **Clayton Yeutter**. . . .

The presence of Ed Rogers in the group may be the secret behind **George Bush**'s readiness to crack down on Sununu's travel abuses. Bush, as we reported two months ago, had told Sununu to get rid of Rogers. But Sununu then announced he intended to retain Rogers for several more months. Was the chief of staff telling the president "I'm the real boss around here"? In any event, as the rumor goes, Bush took it that way and decided it was time to let Sununu know who was working for whom. . . .

Bush is expected to ask Commerce Secretary Mosbacher to head his 1992 reelection campaign. Pollster Teeter is expected to either co-chair the committee or become a high-profile operative. Former Bush vice presidential aide **Craig Fuller** is likely to head the 1992 National Republican Convention. Malek, who ran last year's economic summit in Houston, is expected to lend a hand in the operation. . . .

Senator **George Mitchell** is trying to patch relations with environmental groups, which were strained last year when he forged a deal with the White House on the Clean Air Act. The Democratic leader is pushing a budget ploy to squelch oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. . . .

Why did **George Shultz**, in 1987, when he was secretary of state, urge that the White House chief of staff fly on Air Force planes? The explanation, State Department sources say, could be that he was trying to find some partners in guilt for transgressions of his own. Just the year before, to take one example, he had flown to Boston on a military jet to attend Game 5 of the World Series. The trip cost the taxpayers $11,000. Shultz paid $148. . . .

C. Boyden Gray, the president's counsel, was interested in the prospect of replacing Attorney General **Dick Thornburgh** at the Justice Department. But Gray backed off, deciding it would be wisest to aim for the Supreme Court. . . .

HUD Secretary **Jack Kemp** surprised few Bush administration officials when he invited Israel's housing minister, **Ariel Sharon**, to the department for a meeting, despite White House antipathy toward Sharon's push to erect Jewish settlements on Arab-occupied lands. Secretary of State **James Baker** went ballistic over the visit, according to aides, suspecting that Kemp's move was another attempt to position himself for a 1996 presidential bid. . . .

Although 1996 is far off, the GOP expects Kemp to be joined by Vice President **Dan Quayle** in the quest for the nomination, along with Governor **Pete Wilson** of California and **Lamar Alexander**, the new Education Department chief. . . .

What are the secrets of **Joseph Verner Reed**'s power? The chief of protocol has certain embarrassing eccentricities, including a propensity for inserting himself into photographs of world leaders and an inordinate regard for being awarded medals and sashes by foreign governments. But no job in government is more secure than his. Not only does he share George Bush's roots in the exclusive and, as we reported a few months back, antisemitic Jupiter Island Club of Hobe Sound, Florida, but he shares an even deeper male bond with the president: He is "taking care of" the president's old friend, **Jennifer Fitzgerald**, by providing her with a nice job as his deputy. . . .

In—*White House*: Special Assistant for Soviet Affairs—**Edward A. Hewett**. *Education*: Chief of Staff—**Stephen I. Danzansky**. *Interior*: Assistant Secretary for Fish & Wildlife & Parks—**Mike Hayden**. *Veterans Affairs*: Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning—**Jo Ann K. Webb**. *Agencies and Commissions:* Director, Central Intelligence Agency—**Robert M. Gates.** Member, National Transportation Safety Board—**John A. Hammerschmidt Jr.** Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission—**Ivan Selin**.

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Lethal Weapon

When thousands die in high-speed police chases, who do we really need protecting from?

by Richard Shumate

It was Saturday night in a suburb of Los Angeles, and 19-year-old Doug Gray found himself with serious time on his hands. He had taken his date to the drive-in, but there was a lengthy wait until the movie began. So he did what many a doltish 19-year-old has done to impress a girl. He began doing doughnuts with his car.

Before long, a passing LAPD squad car spied Gray's vehicular gymnastics and turned into the drive-in to stop him. Panicked, Gray took off. And so did the LAPD. Neglecting to turn on their lights and siren, the officers followed Gray out of the lot and onto the crowded streets, caroming after the teenager.

Like Gray, 36-year-old Susan Tartakoff also planned to spend her Saturday night with a movie. She had picked up a few of her husband's favorites at the local video store and begun the short drive back home. She wouldn't get there for five months.

As Tartakoff proceeded through an intersection, Gray rammed into her at 90 miles per hour. Today, Tartakoff spends most of her time in rehab—"practicing standing, crawling, and other things," she says. She's paralyzed from the waist down.

This March, Americans were outraged to see the videotape of Los Angeles police officers beating Rodney King—an episode that began with a simple speeding violation. King was permanently injured, and four officers now face the possibility of lengthy prison sentences. The Tartakoff and King cases, six years apart, may seem at first to have nothing in common. But only at first. Rodney King and Susan Tartakoff are both casualties of a time-honored police tradition: the high-speed chase.

According to a study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), two of every five high-speed police chases in

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the U.S. end in property damage. One in four ends in injury. And far, far too many end in death: An average of 287 people died as a result of police pursuit every year during the eighties. Mind you, most of the bad guys being pursued aren't rapacious, gun-toting thugs. The vast majority of high-speed chases begin with a minor traffic violation and escalate into emotion-filled, fuel-injected duels.

To the officers chasing two Augusta, Georgia, teenagers down country roads last year, it didn't seem to matter that the kids' crime was swiping $9.21 worth of gas. They had to be caught and punished—or killed, which is what happened first. Of course, those teenagers *did* break the law. The 68-year-old Augusta man who was hit and killed after a high-speed pursuit the same weekend didn't. He was just standing on the corner.

Standing on the corner—that's exactly what pregnant Regina Morton was doing when she got hit and thrown by a car being chased across Chicago's South Side. Her 54-year-old neighbor Hugh Santee, on the other hand, was a more challenging target: He was trying to cross the street. Santee died after being hit *twice*, first by a speeding Cadillac and then by the Chicago police. Washington's6- Reginald Baker was also taking a stroll when a stolen Nissan Pathfinder plowed into him last month, D.C. police cars fast behind him. The Nissan kept going, the police kept chasing. Minutes later, just as the police gave up and flipped off their sirens, the Nissan barrelled into seven-year-old James Gripper and his aunt. Both were thrown and killed.

Nor is the casualty count of American police chases restricted to suspects and innocent bystanders. An American police officer is more likely to die from a chase than from a bullet. But at 100 miles an hour, statistics don't make much of an impression on the average American cop.

When a criminal throws down the gauntlet, asking a cop not to chase flies in the face of police culture, not to mention society's romantic expectations. Mel Gibson and Clint Eastwood never stop to ponder the consequences of chasing. Although the philosopher Seneca wisely mused that "hesitation is the best cure for anger," Smokey always went after the Bandit.

Perhaps that's why, despite the astounding frequency of police crashes, American police departments are remarkably indifferent to the casualties they leave in their wake. Few departments even keep records of the resulting human and property cost. Most don't teach their officers how to cope with the stress of high-speed chases. And only a few renegade departments have begun to amend a decades-old policy of catch-at-any-cost. For the rest of the police departments across America, the chase is always on, regardless of whether the pursued has a broken taillight or a corpse hanging out of his trunk.

To the average U.S. police officer, real life looks a lot less volatile than a *Lethal Weapon* sequel. According to Geoffrey Alpert, a University of South Carolina criminology professor and author of the book *Police Pursuit Driving*, 99 times out of 100, drivers pull over when an officer flashes his lights. But when it comes to the one who doesn't, the emotions that kick in can make even a veteran officer forget the basics of Policing 101.

Cruisin' for a bruisin'

Bruce Cabral spent 23 years as a New York cop before becoming director of driving instruction at Georgia's police academy. "For weeks, you're driving 45 or 50 miles per hour, going to calls," he says. "Then, suddenly, you're driving 100 miles per hour. Your knees are shaking, and your hands are shaking—not because you're scared but because you're all pumped up." And to make matters worse, you've got tunnel vision. "The faster you drive," Cabral says, " the less you see."

And the more stressed you get, it seems, the less you think. "I was pursuing a shot-fired call, heading down Benning Road onto 8th Street NE," recalls Gary Hankins, head of D.C.'s Fraternal Order of Police. "The adrenaline was pumping, and I was scared. Oncoming cars weren't avoiding me at all, even though I was in a marked car. And then I realized what had happened. A fuse had blown in the car. I was speeding along, but my emergency lights weren't working."

A dangerous oversight like that doesn't mean Hankins is a lousy cop. It's just evidence that he's human. During times of fear, almost everybody exhibits what psychologists and physiologists have dubbed the "flight or fight" instinct. The body, when confronted by the stress of fear, produces two chemicals, adrenaline and noradrenaline, which combine to produce a hyped-up sensation. "That adrenaline is saying that at any moment you might be killed and your kids won't have a father or your kids won't have a mother," explains Theodore Blau of the Manatee County, Florida, sheriff's department. "Who knows what's in that car—a dead body, 10 kilos of cocaine, an atomic device?" And if you crash, well, good Lord: a lost suspect, a departmental investigation, a lawsuit, a ruined career. Pop goes the adrenaline again.

Yet what happens to all those Rodney Kings and Susan Tartakoffs can't be explained as a solely physiological phenomenon. When someone tries to run, as Alpert observes, he commits a very serious crime—"contempt of cop." As a result, the police culture

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may play a more important role in what happens next than mere chemical reactions. Refusing to stop shows a lack of respect that can't be allowed to go unchallenged—even when the initial offense is a traffic violation and the resulting chase means risking lives.

Miami officer Louie Fernandez has been a narcotics cop for years. He remembers one chase particularly well. After watching a cocaine deal go down, he followed the dealer's car slowly down the street. When both cars arrived at an intersection, Fernandez flipped on his police lights and moved to make an arrest. The other car went flying through the red light and down the street. Despite the traffic passing right in front of him, Fernandez floored it, too. "If they make it," he explains, "you have to."

To Fernandez, the decision to fly through the intersection wasn't exactly a choice. It was instinct. It's what policemen *do*. And that's the way police logic usually works—or doesn't work—on the road. Fernandez's high-speed chase came to an end when the dealer smashed into two other cars and three people were injured, including a two-year-old girl who was riding in the car with the dealer.

Road kills

Almost every police officer has an anecdote like Fernandez's: a hot pursuit that ended in a heap. But the prevalence of crashes, and even the number of officer deaths behind the wheel, have barely made a dent on American officer training. Police recruits get steeped in the technical skills of managing a car at high speeds, but when it comes to making smart decisions in a high-stress situation, cops are on their own.

To Manatee County officer Theodore Blau, who is also a police psychologist, teaching driving skills is useless without the second part of the equation: helping cops learn how to think when the adrenaline begins to pump. Which is why, in his sheriff's department, prospective officers are given psychological evaluations designed to weed out poor high-stress performers. Then, during training, officers go through role-playing simulations that they can fall back on when confronted with real-life chases.

If such touchy-feely training doesn't seem very coplike, well, it isn't. Most cops in U.S. police departments are simply *expected* to cope at 100 miles an hour. And when they don't—when they mow down a pedestrian or run into a house—those incidents are seen as isolated flukes, not part of a nationwide trend, since urban police departments don't keep records on the subject. When asked for information about the property or human costs of police chases in their cities, police spokesmen all across the country had the same, terse response.

"There's nothing I can tell you about that," says the spokesman for the Atlanta department.

"We don't have anything on that—nothing," says the spokesman in St. Louis.

"I don't know. I really can't help you," says one of New York City's finest.

"We don't keep that information," says a spokesman for the D.C. police.

And no wonder. Last winter alone, at least six D.C. cops crashed during high-speed chases. The unofficial casualty count: one dead 35-year-old woman, one seriously injured pedestrian, five scraped-up teenaged car thieves, five injured officers, three smashed black-and-whites, and at least one mangled tree.

Pay as you slay

Insouciance about chases may be common in police departments across the country, but in the nineties, it's also going to be expensive, thanks to a new Supreme Court decision that holds cities liable for the lives that get between the cops and robbers.

Traditionally, sovereign-immunity statutes kept cities from paying large awards to the casualties of high-speed chases. But in 1989's *Canton* v. *Harris*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled municipalities could be held liable for injuries if plaintiffs could prove that the city employees involved were inadequately trained. The family of a Detroit automotive worker killed on his way to work by fleeing cars won $1 million from the city of Detroit and several other jurisdictions. After similar judgments in Texas, Virginia, and elsewhere, local governments and their insurance carriers have begun to take a long, hard look at how officers are trained for the chase.

Some departments are picking up on Manatee's stress-training courses—perhaps the easiest way to improve the odds for innocent bystanders. But even smarter are the few departments now asking not just *how* to chase, but whether the carnage is worth it in the first place.

After several Rodney King-style reports, an embarrassed Dallas, Texas, began reining in its lawmen during the eighties. Today, unless the suspected crime is homicide or armed robbery, only three cars can be involved: the primary pursuit vehicle, one backup, and—a critical new safeguard—a trailing car occupied by a supervising sergeant. This supervisor, somewhat detached from the emotions of the chase, evaluates the situation—the weather, the visibility, the traffic, the presence of pedestrians—and decides when to stop a hot pursuit.

While that might be a sensible first step for the nation's departments, a smarter approach has been working for a decade in Baltimore. Acting on the

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The Washington Monthly

JOURNALISM AWARD

FOR MARCH 1991 IS PRESENTED TO

Connie Bruck
The New Yorker

We thought it was impossible for a writer to make us sympathize with a top-tier Wall Street arbitrageur. Connie Bruck changed our minds. In the March 11 issue, she built a complicated, ultimately compelling defense of John Mulheren, a self-made and self-destructive financier convicted of stock manipulation in the wake of Ivan Boesky's confessions. While Bruck exculpates Mulheren by deconstructing the government's flimsy case, Wall Street itself gets off less easily. Through Mulheren's unusual story, she probes the Street's oblique but vicious snob rule—a culture in which class distinctions may play as much a part in federal investigations as do rigged deals.

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Nominations for stories published or aired in May and June will close July 15. The winner will be announced in the September issue.

philosophy that handling a police car, like handling a gun, requires a serious degree of caution, officers there completely rewrote their traditional policy of chase-at-all-costs. "It is better to allow a criminal to temporarily escape apprehension," they decided, "than to jeopardize the safety of citizens and the officer in a high-speed pursuit."

How does that play out on the streets? When a suspect flees by car, officers won't pursue unless failing to do so will result in "grave injury or death." Mind you, that doesn't mean the Baltimore force simply lets its bad guys get away; it means it's been relying on ingenuity over high velocity. Nowadays, the officers track fleeing subjects by radio, or from helicopters safely above the fray.

Of course, the high-speed chase is not likely to disappear from American police culture altogether—nor should it. What criminal is going to stop if he knows that he can run away with impunity? Besides, sometimes the bad guy does get caught. A few days before Rodney King's notorious assault, there was a high-speed chase in Georgia. Steven Anthony Mobley, a suspect in a string of armed robberies in Atlanta's northeastern suburbs, sped off when police tried to apprehend him for questioning. When officers caught up with Mobley after a 40-mile chase, they found evidence linking him to the execution-style slaying of a 24-year-old college student during the robbery of a Domino's Pizza stand a month earlier.

As the Mobley case suggests, some folks *are* worth chasing: dangerous criminals fleeing after serious crimes. As for the traffic violators and the otherwise unarmed and undangerous, police departments should just record their license numbers and let them go—for the moment. After all, the job of a policeman is not to match a criminal feat for feat—to think, as Fernandez puts it, if *they* make it, you have to, too. Rather, it's to be smarter. It's to make the critical distinctions about what's worth going after and what's not.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of today's police departments aren't willing to make any distinctions at all—even when the folly of that practice is tragically apparent. A few months ago, three-year-old Dominique Spears was killed while playing on the quiet street where she lived. She never heard the L.A. police officers speeding toward her; in their zeal to catch their prey, they'd forgotten their sirens and lights.

Surely the LAPD learns *something* from mistakes like this one. Surely somebody's paying attention?

"We don't keep records on that police-chase stuff," snaps an LAPD spokesman. "You'll have to try somewhere else." □

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The W-2 Step

The Democrats are right that the Social Security tax is unfair, but they're wrong about how to fix it

by James Bennet

Consider Clayton Karioka, who serves up "Hazelnut," "Amaretto," and "Decaf Genuine Guatemala Antigua" coffee from behind the counter at Bucks County Nut & Coffee Company in Washington's Union Station, where Hill staff and even the occasional political celebrity go to eat. ("You can always tell when someone's here," he says, "'cause the Secret Service come for coffee.") Karioka enjoys his job, guessing what the customers are going to order, joking with the cops who walk by, trying to pick up Spanish from Union Station's janitorial staff. He works from 6:30 in the morning until 2:00 in the afternoon, five days a week, and makes $5.50 per hour—$1.25 more than the minimum wage—with a raise scheduled after he's been with Bucks County a year.

All in all, the pay's not bad for a young, single man—until the government takes its cut. Karioka doesn't know it, but he's one of the chief victims of a sly shift in the tax burden that, despite the Reagan tax cuts of the early eighties and the Democratic reforms that came later, has left low-income workers paying as much as 28 percent more in taxes than they did in 1980. It's a shift that Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan brought to national attention with his proposed Social Security tax cut—a dumb plan, but one driven by a commendable analysis that should send all Democrats who preach "tax fairness" scurrying to their calculators and tax tables to come up with a smarter solution.

Karioka seems to have a line on most any subject, from welfare reform to gender difference in coffee selection, but ask him about his taxes and he goes blank. "Hold on," he says, and pulls a crumpled check stub out of a cupboard. Over the course of two weeks, he made $402, counting overtime but not tips. Of that,

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the federal government withheld $40.71, the Social Security Administration $30.77 (on the line marked "FICA"), and the D.C. government $22.18. That left Karioka with $308.34 to live on. But witness the first miracle of the federal tax system: Half the Social Security tax vanished from his wages before he even received his check (50 percent of the 12.4 percent tax is paid by your boss; in planning what he has to pay his employees, he adds in his share of the tax as part of the total cost, which means if the government didn't get that money, you would).

Now, while the progressive income tax was cut at the beginning of the decade, Social Security taxes were being hiked so that today's workers would salt away savings against their retirement. But, as Moynihan pointed out, the government is essentially treating the payroll tax like any other tax, not saving its revenue to fund pensions but blowing it on federal projects like John Sununu's skiing holidays. In other words, the Social Security tax has become an income tax by another name, with two important differences: We all pay the same rate, and we pay it on the first to the 53,400th dollar of our incomes, after which the affluent pay nothing.

The Moynihan plan would have given every worker, from the gas pumper to the investment banker, a 1 percent tax break. For less than that, you could give every taxpayer in the poorest 40 percent of the population a 15 percent break, and in the middle 20 percent, a 7 percent cut.

Factoring in the employer's share of Social Security shows that Karioka pays 24 percent of his income to the federal government, and 29 percent for taxes overall, before he gets back his refund of excess withholding. (This is the second miracle of federal taxes: Uncle Sam often withholds more than he should, which means that workers generously provide their government with interest-free loans—in Karioka's case, a loan of $323.75—for as long as 16 months, to be paid back after the workers file. This scam is more familiar to upscale taxpayers: "As investments go," *The Wall Street Journal* recently warned its readers, "tax refunds rank among the biggest losers.") Once you allow for the refund, Karioka winds up paying 21 percent of his income, excluding sales taxes, to the feds, most of it in Social Security taxes. Overall, even though their income tax rates went down, childless workers in Karioka's income group saw their federal tax burdens rise *10.7 percent* in the eighties. Poorer Americans fared even worse. The tax burdens of the 20 percent of families (those without children—more on this later) who make less than Karioka rose about 28.5 percent, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Meanwhile, Americans in the richest fifth of the population, where Social Security taxes take less of a bite, watched their tax burdens drop 4.6 percent.

Karioka's federal taxes leave him $8,435.25 annually, before D.C. takes its chunk, and $7,880.75 afterward (another trick of the Reagan tax changes was to transfer more of the burden to state tax codes). That's what Karioka has left to feed, house, clothe, and improve himself. Unlike the businessmen who jam the halls of the Capitol to rail against capital gains taxes or the guys in suits who stood outside the White House last fall holding signs that read, "HONK IF YOU HATE TAX HIKES," Karioka never really notices what he's paying. "I don't pay attention to it," he says with a shy grin. "All I do is just deposit it to my account and keep on going. . . . No matter what's pulling you down, there are things you can enjoy." For our purposes, set aside the miracle of human nature and simply witness the third miracle of withholding: The payments don't seem real when you don't write a check. Multiply Karioka by about a hundred million people and imagine the potential for the Democrats if someone would make those payments seem real and show those workers how they've been swindled.

As a result of Reagan's bait-and-switch tax cuts, 69 percent of American families emerged from the eighties paying more in Social Security taxes than they do in income taxes—which is the main reason that the poorer 60 percent of families pay more in federal taxes than they did in 1980. That's the important message Moynihan helped deliver. Unfortunately, his proposed solution wouldn't have done much to correct the problem. Moynihan wanted to cut the Social Security tax for everyone by 1 percent, an idea that played beautifully in the media: The "common man's tax cut," *U.S. News and World Report* called it, while *The Wall Street Journal*, more sensitive, preferred the "working person's tax cut," labels that invoked sweaty brows, aching shoulders, and Miller Time, without getting too specific about which workers would benefit most from the change. Ron Brown,

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chairman of the Democratic National Committee, which endorsed Moynihan's proposal, offered the typical, unsatisfying summation: "Pat Moynihan," he explained to a meeting of the party faithful, "wants to keep money in the pockets of American working families." No doubt. But the questions no one asked were: which families, and how much?

Since Brown is a successful lawyer, his family probably stood to make the maximum, about $657. That's the average break for families in the richest fifth of the population, families who cashed in on the tax cuts of the eighties. By far the largest portion of the total cut would go to this group. Meanwhile, families in America's poorest fifth—ones that watched their before-tax incomes fall by 5.5 percent in the eighties and their after-tax incomes by 7 percent—would pull in a whopping $73. Karioka would get about two bucks a week. And here's the kicker: Moynihan's bill calls for the tax to return to its current rate in 25 years, and then to climb *even higher* in order to cover the retirement benefits of those who would benefit from the tax break today. In sum: Moynihan wanted to soak our children to bribe the rich to give a small tax break to the poor. Is this the "fairness" Democrats stand for?

Look at what happens when you set your top target for those who deserve a break a little lower. The Moynihan plan would have given every American worker, from the gas pumper to the investment banker, a 1 percent Social Security tax break; the average annual cost to the treasury over the next six years, using the senator's conservative figures, would be $27 billion. For less than that, you could give every taxpayer in the poorest 40 percent of the population, where incomes run up to an average of $27,400 for a family of four, a 25 percent federal tax cut. Talk about feeling treated fairly: Karioka would get a reward from his government of $639. Unsatisfied with less than an electoral majority? Then how about giving the bottom 40 percent a 15 percent break, and the middle 20 percent a 7 percent cut? You'd still be spending less money than Moynihan.

Of course these reforms are expensive propositions. But there are ways to pay for them that reinforce the notion that those who can derive the most pleasure from their income should bear the greatest burden of taxation. (Precisely because, though they complain more, by any objective standard they should feel less pain: Taking 21 percent away from Karioka hurts him much more than taking an equal percentage from a multimillionaire.) One way to offset these tax losses through the Social Security system would be to treat benefits as ordinary income and tax them at normal rates, with a provision to avoid double-taxing workers' original contributions; conservatively extrapolating from CBO numbers, this would raise up to $75 billion by 1995. Another solution would be the Democrats' famous surtax on millionaires, first proposed during the budget battle last fall to bluff George Bush and now reintroduced by Senator Albert Gore. This was derided in the press as a purely symbolic gesture, but in fact it would raise $44.3 billion by 1995. The most aggressive solution, recommended by the group Citizens for Tax Justice: Raise the income tax rates on corporations and individuals making more than $250,000 to 38 percent, still well below the "confiscatory" levels that drove Ronald Reagan into the arms of Barry Goldwater. This one change would raise more than $30 billion per year.

More buck for your bang

There appear to be two main obstacles to the Democrats proposing this type of reform; you might call them the kids-only approach and the $80,000 attitude. The latest Democratic tax initiative, put forward by Gore and Rep. Tom Downey, falls into the kids-only trap. It dispenses its break in the form of beefed-up credits, based on the number of children a family has.

Calculations of Americans' tax burdens focus on families with children, and those numbers tend to drive Democratic tax policy. Like the Gore proposal, the successful reforms of 1986 and 1990 also aimed at expanding credits linked to the number of children in a given family. This is why, though the tax burden has dropped somewhat for poor Americans with children since 1985, it has continued to rise for those, like Karioka, who are childless. The kids-only approach certainly makes sense in principle—families with children deserve extra help. But Democrats have pursued this type of reform to the exclusion of assisting the childless, who, among Americans making less than $25,000, outnumber those with children by almost two to one. So far, Democratic tax reform has left the vast majority of low-income Americans doing an awful lot of work to take care of their fellow citizens' kids.

In one crucial respect, Gore's proposal is a major improvement on Moynihan's: Rather than offering virtually the same break to all, it discriminates among workers, concentrating benefits on poorer families. But, like the Moynihan plan, it still scatters its benefits way up the income scale, to families that pull in as much as $75,000 per year. Why? Because it's got an $80,000 attitude.

That attitude springs from the fact that, these days, the Democrats have gone a bit soft on the middle class. As Majority Leader Dick Gephardt put it after

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the budget negotiations last fall: "We have begun to redefine the debate from 'to tax or not to tax' to 'who pays, and is it fair?' This gives us a shot at reclaiming large groups of middle-class Americans who haven't been excited about Democrats for quite some time." The problem is, another term the Democrats have begun to redefine is "middle class" itself. When you ask Gephardt to whom he's referring, you get a glimpse into the mindset behind the Moynihan and Gore tax cuts: "Various definitions," he says. "It's hard to get great agreement. But we're certainly talking about people under $80,000. We're talking about the vast, broad majority of America that we believe to be the middle class."

Under $80,000. Vast majority, indeed. Only 7.6 million Americans make more than $53,400 per year. The vast, broad majority are closer to Clayton Karioka: Of the 133 million wage earners in the U.S., fully 67 million—just over 50 percent—make $15,000 or less. Seventy-one percent earn $25,000 or less. OK, you're thinking, but Gephardt probably means *family* income, not individuals' salaries. Fair enough. A family of four living in a big city may find it hard to make ends meet on $80,000. But these people already received tax breaks in the eighties. Today, society could best relieve their financial worries not through changes in the tax code but through means like controlling college tuition and medical costs. And fundamentally, no matter how aggrieved they feel, such families are statistically not middle class. In 1990, the richest fifth of the population, for families of four, began at $76,000. In the statistical middle, people don't make lawyers' salaries or doctors' salaries—or even congressmen's salaries. The average for a family of four in the middle fifth in 1990 was $39,200, *half* the amount suggested by Gephardt.

Democratic leaders feel they have to stretch the middle class to accommodate wealthier Americans, because those taxpayers make the biggest fuss about their burdens. But sounding like Republicans is a strange way to offer voters an attractive alternative to George Bush. Bolder leaders would instead carry the tax fairness message to Bucks County Nut & Coffee, to wake up workers who *are* being ripped off but don't know it. They would discover that this is one of those happy instances in which doing the right thing for the country means doing the right thing for the majority—that is, doing the right thing politically. If advocates of tax fairness are serious about helping those workers who are getting swindled by the Social Security switcheroo—those workers who most need a boost to improve their skills and move up—they'll stop playing with the middle class as though it were a Slinky and put the money not just where the most, but where the most deserving, mouths are. ☐

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TIDBITS & OUTRAGES

COMPANY OFFICIALS WILL BE SENT TO UNLEAVENWORTH
The government has indicted the kosher food company Manischewitz for conspiring to fix matzo prices.

POLICE MOVED IN AFTER THEY SAW 14 ACCOMPLICES GET OUT OF HIS CAR
In Van Wert, Ohio, a professional clown has been charged with trying to hire a hit man to kill his wife.

MAYBE GOD WAS JUST REPLACING ALL THOSE CASUALTIES
More than 20 crew members of the USS *Acadia* became pregnant while the vessel was deployed in the Persian Gulf. A Navy spokesman said there were no indications of improper fraternization between the men and women of the ship.

WE DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHO WON THE MORTON DOWNEY JR. LOOK-ALIKE CONTEST.
The *Ladies' Home Journal* Oprah Winfrey look-alike contest was won by a man.

GREAT MOMENTS IN LEGISLATION I
Although Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley had wanted to veto an ordinance ceding more power to the city council, he accidentally signed it instead.

GREAT MOMENTS IN LEGISLATION II
The Colorado legislature passed a bill—later vetoed by the governor—that would have banned any negative remarks about vegetables.

"HEY, HE WON, DIDN'T HE?"
The *Los Angeles Times* reports that Charles Harman, the chief of staff to Senator Sam Nunn, received more than $32,000 in consulting fees and expenses from Nunn's campaign treasury during the past campaign cycle. Nunn's treasurer told the *Times* that the money was for advice that Harman provided during the campaign—when Nunn was reelected with no opposition.

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What Mother Teresa Could Learn in a Leather Bar

Gay men's response to AIDS shows how the larger community can help heal itself

by Katherine Boo

At 5 a.m. on February 6, Tony Harding died in a quiet corner of D.C. General Hospital. Like a number of other patients in the public hospital wing, he was young, indigent, uninsured, estranged from his family, and mentally ill. But unlike most of the others, Tony Harding had AIDS. In that, he was profoundly lucky.

AIDS. Luck. It seems unthinkable to couple those words. But in the weeks after Tony's death, I found myself associating them often. For if his death was grim and undignified, the months that preceded it were not. He couldn't pay his rent; it was covered. He couldn't cook his food; it was delivered to him, steaming. He had no medical insurance; he got first-rate medical care, free. He lied on his social security forms; a lawyer straightened things out, pro bono. One Saturday night, he found himself handcuffed in a ward at St. Elizabeths mental hospital. As city officials moved to commit him, friends and advocates negotiated his release. Last Christmas, a man he hardly knew picked him up at his apartment in Shaw and drove him to Nordstrom. He returned with an utterly unnecessary, beautiful pair of shoes.

Tony Harding, mind you, was not an activist or even a minor celebrity in Washington's gay community, nor was he well connected. The son of blue-collar parents from Crofton, Maryland, he spent his brief adulthood as a waiter at the American Cafe and as a clerk at Pan Am. He was, I suppose, an ordinary young man. Yet there was something remarkable about his dying. For a year, as he slowly lost command of his mind and body, he passed his days in the hands of agencies, hospitals, doctors, friends, and strangers. They did not let him fall.

This month, as we note the 10th anniversary of the first official report on the epidemic, the mark of the 110,000th life, this seems perhaps the dullest of silver linings. But as debates over

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AIDS activism and medical research dominated our attention, a quiet development occurred in a few American cities. For the first time in recent history, AIDS brought members of the organized middle class into the ghetto of the human services bureaucracy. They found the system lacking, so they changed it. Outside the fragmented, assembly line world of social services, with an army of volunteers, the gay community built a new way of caring for some of society's most vulnerable members. Unfortunately, it is still only for the few.

Four days after Harding, David, another patient in the same D.C. General ward, died. The hospital moved the body to the morgue, recorded the occurrence in its files, and closed the case. Until a patient volunteered the information days later, David's doctor didn't know the young man was dead. David's case, not Tony's, shows how government care for the poor usually works. Which is precisely why the exception—the swords and plowshares of the urban AIDS network—should be shared.

The day Harding's brief obituary appeared in *The Washington Post*, the Metro section was dominated by a lawsuit against D.C.'s foster care system. Sixty-nine percent of children who were candidates for adoption had never had their files forwarded to the proper adoption unit. Five-year-olds were judged ready for "independent living." Volunteers willing to take children were turned away. In the chaos, some children were simply lost. A social worker explained, "A fire starts and then you put it out and then we move to the next." The children in foster care weren't, it seemed, really children. They were a paperwork problem that sat for years in someone's in-box.

In America, this is how we usually serve the needy: as little as we can get away with. Despite the work of advocates, Americans with steady jobs and health insurance don't hear of—and don't care about—the flaws in the social service system until problems reach crisis proportions. But even when the system isn't scandalous, it can rarely be confused with genuine service. For if poverty, homelessness, and disease have complex sources that demand rifleshot, differentiated responses, those complexities seldom touch the human services bureaucracy—government or nonprofit—because bureaucracies are driven by numbers. Every year, each of the D.C. government's hundreds of social service programs produces a performance evaluation chart that supposedly attests to the good use of its ample budget: a neat, McDonald's-style tally of numbers served. In an environment like this, it's understandable that only what can be counted tends to get done. What is markedly absent is compassion for, and responsiveness to, messy individual lives.

It was this sort of "service" that horrified Cliff Morrison when the first few dozen cases of what would later be called AIDS began to crowd San Francisco General Hospital in the early eighties. Nurses refused to touch the patients; doctors and orderlies rushed through their duties and ran away. As a nurse, Morrison knew this unfriendly service was only an amplified version of the care usually offered the hospital's largely low-class clientele—or, for that matter, average hospital patients anywhere in the country. Patients were jolted awake at all hours for treatments, even when sleep was their only escape from pain. Dinner was microwaved, congealed, often cold. Medical students came at 5 a.m. to examine them. Nurses barged into their rooms without knocking. But now there was a critical difference—the attitude of the new guys on the ward.

"I remember one of the first patients on the unit, a 22-year-old man from Iowa," says Morrison. "He had advanced Kaposi's sarcoma; he knew he wasn't going to live much longer." He wanted his lover to visit, but the rules restricted

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visitors to "family." He wanted painkillers, but he didn't want to lose his head. "He told us very firmly, 'I want morphine, but I want to know what's going on. I don't want to struggle to breathe.' Today we don't look at that as unreasonable," Morrison says, "but we just weren't used to having a patient lay it out that way." Over the next few months, there would be a hundred more like him.

Morrison knew that expecting to cow such vocal patients was not just futile, it was wrong. So he took his complaints—and with them, his ideas—to higher-ups at San Francisco General. While it was rare for a nurse to get the attention of hospital administrators, Morrison had a few distinct advantages—first among them the fear and helplessness of the hospital staff in dealing with this new and contagious disease. As a gay man, Morrison also had some clout with San Francisco's gay community, which was closely monitoring the hospital's response. But perhaps most important, Morrison had a plan: Give him space, and he would upend the usual way of running a hierarchical, big-city hospital ward. The administrators gave him that space.

In the new ward Morrison designed, patients, not administrators, decided who was "immediate family." The conventional visiting hours that excluded waiters, security guards, and other night-shift workers were abolished altogether. And in assembling a staff, Morrison began to look not just for credentials, but for compassion: nurses who wouldn't gingerly take a pulse and split, but who would sit on the bed, throw an arm around a shoulder, and listen.

Yet there was still too much even compassionate nurses couldn't always do: counsel lovers, help write letters to long-lost moms and dads. In the small-town community hospital of old, there were candy stripers and doctors' wives to make life a little more bearable for the patients, but this was a modern, urban, *public* hospital. "People weren't used to opening the doors to the public," says Morrison. "It can be a real hassle." But the stakes in this case were particularly high. "Finally, the hospital threw up its hands and said, 'Do what you have to do.' "

One of Morrison's early stabs at involving the community came in the winter of 1982, in a now-defunct leather bar in the city's South of Market district. When he walked into the loud and fusty room, he was rocked by a sense of futility. "They're going to laugh," he thought. But then someone pulled him up onto the makeshift stage. "I started stumbling through my five-minute presentation," he remembers, "and suddenly I realized the room had fallen silent. The entire bar stopped and listened." And when it was over, virtually every man in the bar reached for his wallet.

Thanks to dozens of other community leaders, similar scenes played out all over the city. Within months, Morrison's ward was deep in volunteers, emptying bedpans, running errands, holding hands. Patients complained that the hospital blankets were stiff and cold. A community group bought a blanket-warmer. To supplement the requisite microwaved dinners, a kitchen was set up and stocked with soda, coffee, snacks. Every Sunday, local restaurants catered a staff-patient-family brunch. A new projection TV sat in the lounge. "It was pie-in-the-sky stuff," says Morrison sheepishly. "Luxuries." But what was happening at San Francisco General wasn't just a matter of frills.

A comfortable hospital is still a hospital, after all. What patients really wanted was to get out and get back into whatever life was waiting. So Morrison's staff took on a task even more unconventional for a traditionally isolated public institution. They began suturing together a network of local clinics, hospices, welfare offices, and volunteers that would get patients out of the ward and back into the community. For some men, group homes and hospices run by nonprofit groups might be the answer; for those who had a home to go to, there were volunteers ready to deliver meals, pick up prescriptions, and do the laundry.

While such unconventional ideas brought people with AIDS from all over the country clamoring for beds on the public hospital ward, while writers from Randy Shilts to Frances Fitzgerald hailed the innovations, they sat less comfortably with the city hospital's own administration. "I spent all my time for two years battling the higher-ups," says Morrison. "Every time new ideas came up there was great resistance at every level. Part of it was homophobia and part of it was simply institutional. Large public hospitals are never eager to change. People said, 'We've been doing it our way for 40 years. Why should we make an exception now?'" The answer was obvious: The new way was working.

And soon, city administrators saw not only that it was good but that it was cheap. To treat an AIDS patient from diagnosis to death, the city of San Francisco spent 40 percent of the national average—a huge savings, even setting aside economies of scale. While that figure made a few bureaucrats in other cities sit up, the majority shook their heads. "Only," they said, "in San Francisco."

The subjective case

It's a fine old house in suburban Virginia: bay windows, high ceilings, a porch lined with chairs. On a trellis in the vegetable garden, several tomato

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plants grow. Inside the house, four impoverished young men are living with AIDS, with the help of D.C.'s Whitman-Walker Clinic.

Ten years ago, Whitman-Walker wasn't in the business of subsidized housing; it was the place you went when you got genital warts. Today, the 14th Street clinic has become the city's largest health facility for people with AIDS. Besides offering group homes and low-cost medical care, the clinic provides its 900 clients with counseling, a food bank, a dental clinic, masseurs, and a battalion of "buddies"—volunteers who do anything from shopping to hand-holding to tending those tomatoes. In his last weeks, Tony Harding began falling out of bed at night. A buddy was there to pick him up off the floor.

If this is what good social services look like, it's not surprising that they happened first in the gay community. "Most people who advocate for the poor don't really believe that poverty could happen to them," offers a D.C. social worker who works with homeless women. "There is commitment, sure, but there is very little personal stake." As HIV moved through the gay community, on the other hand, the wall between server and served came down. A survey last year found that four out of five state directors of mental health have never worked with the mentally ill; on the other hand, two of the original 12 nurses on San Francisco General's 5A are now dead of AIDS. That knowledge creates a very different view of the "client": The patient might someday be you.

The way to assess the work of a place like Whitman-Walker is not, however, through the staff's motivation; it is through people like Adam Gale, a 27-year-old who arrived in D.C. in 1989. "When I came to this city, I had no job, no insurance, no money. It was ridiculous. I had just learned I was HIV-positive. So I went to a support group at Whitman-Walker. A couple of days later, they were helping me move into an apartment." That wasn't an official Whitman-Walker service; it just happened to be what Adam Gale needed. And that's the difference between Whitman-Walker and the usual, unbending social services bureaucracy.

When Adam Gale passed several weeks in D.C. General, his Whitman-Walker buddy kept him supplied with Whoppers, Cokes, and porno magazines. When Gale was discharged, instead of just dropping him off, the buddy moved in until Gale was strong enough to take over.

Of course, these days we're not sure we want our social service system to be this good. Too much help, we're told, creates dependency: a helpless, insatiable clientele. Tell that to Kevin Dickerson, who first met a Whitman-Walker staffer at an AIDS education program in the Arlington County Detention Center, where Dickerson was doing time on a drug charge.

Thirty-four-year-old Dickerson was HIV-positive, broke, and addicted to crack. Homeless after finishing his sentence, he spent three months on the street, camping occasionally at the Central Union Mission just down the street from Whitman-Walker. He remembered his jailhouse encounter, but he resisted going into the clinic. Part of it was the stigma of entering a predominantly white, gay clinic; part of it was pride. "For me, it's a very hard thing to ask for help," he says. But one day, he took the plunge. Before long, he was living in one of Whitman-Walker's group homes.

Whitman-Walker's largess didn't immediately transform Dickerson; it inspired him. "You know, I'd ask for a check for medicine or a phone bill or something, then spend it on drugs. But they got wise pretty fast." He came home one night to a confrontation. "They said, 'We'll hold your stuff for 30 days. You've got a place at the drug treatment unit at George Washington University Hospital.' "

The first time, the treatment didn't take. The second time, it did. Today, Dickerson is living with a lover and doesn't need Whitman-Walker's help too often. But his ties to the clinic endure. "I don't always see eye to eye with everyone at the clinic, but Mike, my caseworker, has never let me down. And let me tell you, there's nothing better in the world than being able to call him up and say, 'Hi, how are you? Everything's going great.' "

This is how effective social service programs work: intimately, aggressively, with feeling. They know enough about the drug-abusing mother to help her *before* her kid starts starving; they reach the mentally ill patient before the suicide attempt. They get into your life, but they're not patsies. And still, as the San Francisco model suggests, they won't drive a city into bankruptcy. The D.C. government spent $42

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million last year "caring" for 2,000 foster kids. Whitman-Walker's kingdom of social services for 900 people costs an annual $7.5 million. The government picks up half the tab. The rest comes from community groups, foundations, an ungodly number of memorial gifts, and a wide swath of the Washington establishment. Today, real estate ads in the city's gay newspaper quietly note, beneath descriptions of light-filled rooms off Dupont Circle, "Five percent of commission goes to services for people with AIDS." This spring, courtesy of a Whitman-Walker program, a friend of mine made out his will—painstakingly planning who would get his videotapes and favorite leather jacket—with the free help of the corporate law firm Hogan & Hartson.

This winter, D.C.'s foster care caseworkers estimated that, thanks to city government regulations, 80 percent of their time went to paperwork and court appearances. Whitman-Walker's 1,600 volunteers, in contrast, spend their time with people. When Adam Gale passed several weeks in D.C. General, his Whitman-Walker buddy kept him steadily supplied with Whoppers, Cokes, and, well, porno magazines. And when Gale was finally discharged, that buddy was waiting to drive him home. But instead of just dropping him off, the buddy hung out until Gale was strong enough to take over.

Today, Gale feels fine, thank you. But last month, on the advice of his caseworker, he put his name on the list for an apartment in one of Whitman-Walker's group homes. "They told me the waiting list was a year long. They said, 'Come on, Adam, think ahead.' "

From bathhouse to your house

The press has long had a tendency to exoticize the gay community. To judge by the mainstream literature of the seventies—the first time gay culture impinged significantly on the mainstream—life was a perpetual pride parade, full of Dykes on Bikes and bathhouse James Deans. It is through that prism of apartness that many have judged the gay community's response to the epidemic in the eighties: a different sort of theater, but theater nonetheless. Praise it they may, but no one asks, 10 years in, what lessons places like Whitman-Walker and Ward 5A hold for other people in need. "That," says one Washington social worker, "is a very different world."

In fact, the ordeals and worries of many of the 63,000 Americans with AIDS are similar to those of other troubled people. Many people with AIDS are cut off from their families, with little money. More than half rely on publicly subsidized food and health care, more than a third on public housing. What is different, and crucial, is that they are educated and demanding; the AIDS epidemic marked the united entrance of thousands of members of a middle-class subculture into the welfare state—a place most of us never have to touch. And that subculture brought with it middle-class expectations and middle-class tools for institutional change. Through ACT-UP and less visible advocates, gay groups demanded humane, responsive services. But as they waited for the bureaucracy to come around, they erected a complex architecture of programs that shows government the difference between real service and business as usual.

Ten years after the first diagnosis, gay men's communal response to AIDS almost seems a thing bred in the bone—an instinct for helping so expected now that it inspires hostility from advocates of causes without real estate agents to funnel commissions their way. Yet however we recast it in 1991, sustained community effort was not a reflexive element of gay life in many places outside of San Francisco—and that's precisely what makes the gay community's reaction so rich in possibility. Success was *not* inevitable. It was astounding, considering the odds.

Perhaps the truest testament to those odds was U.S. government spending. Despite dark prognostications by the Centers for Disease Control, fewer federal dollars were spent in the first two years of AIDS than in the first month of the Tylenol tampering scare. And there was ample discouraging evidence of a less quantifiable kind. Private hospitals from Orange County to Miami barred their emergency room doors. Policemen and undertakers refused to move dead bodies. When Mother Teresa herself tried to start an AIDS hospice in D.C., neighborhood groups went wild. In 1988, Philadelphia's city AIDS commission coolly observed that for the first *seven years* of the epidemic, "virtually all human services for people with AIDS . . . were provided by [community organizations] operating on shoestring budgets and relying primarily on volunteers." The first major fundraising effort for AIDS services in New York City came not from the city, state, or federal government ("We have no epidemic, no AIDS crisis," said Deputy Mayor Victor Botnick in 1985), or even from a do-good foundation, but from a few dozen members of New York's pathbreaking Gay Men's Health Crisis who staged a circus at Madison Square Garden.

In Washington, the impetus for the network was the same: a survival mechanism in the face of what some called condign justice. "In 1982, 1983, there was an automatic disenfranchisement of someone who had AIDS," says Dr. Dolph Druckman, director of the HIV Center at D.C. General Hospital. "Hospitals didn't treat them. Community organizations

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turned them away. Some people were literally kicked out of their beds and left to die. So who picked up the ball? The community." Jim Graham, Whitman-Walker's president in 1982 and now its administrator, doesn't romanticize the effort. "We took the initiative because we *had* to," he says. "The problem was thrust upon us."

Picking up the ball wasn't easy. In 1983, when Whitman-Walker held its first support group for people with AIDS, not a single person showed. "They won't come forward," Graham said at the time, leaving the obvious reason unspoken. But within months, with the help of the gay weekly, *The Washington Blade*, momentum had gathered. The first AIDS benefit was a Sunday afternoon tea dance at a Dupont Circle disco. "We raised $4,000," says Graham, "which was a phenomenal amount of money at the time." Two months later, with that money, Whitman-Walker held a community forum on AIDS—the first opportunity many gay men had to get the straight dope on a disease the media discussed only politely. "We made a poster and put some ads in the *Blade*," Graham says, "but we had no idea whether people would come."

Eleven hundred people showed up to hear John Willig, one of the city's first people with AIDS, tell a graphic story of baths, sex, and a horrifying diagnosis. That night, four dozen people signed on as clinic volunteers. A few months later, with a $17,500 city contract, Whitman-Walker hired its first AIDS services staffer. At the time, Graham and others thought the whole "epidemic" might afflict only 15 to 30 D.C. men. Eight years later, Whitman-Walker has served 5,000 Washingtonians.

Programs like those at Whitman-Walker and Ward 5A were the offspring of urgent self-interest, but they have matured into something more complex. Today, the majority of D.C.'s new HIV-positive population is not gay. These new, needier clients—poor, minority, addicted, increasingly female—have brutally exposed the limits of private-sector initiatives; this fall, for the first time, the strapped Gay Men's Health Crisis began turning away people in need. Yet concerted government assistance has helped some of the models adapt. Whitman-Walker's volunteers now serve a surging population of black intravenous drug users and women, while new groups like Impact, Lifelink, and the Inner City AIDS Network have sprung up with government and private sector help to provide services and referrals to the black and latino communities. In Dallas, says Kevin South, director of the AIDS National Interfaith Network, a coalition of community ministries, "We're seeing blue-haired old ladies serving inner-city addicts." And in San Francisco, where the disease quickly overwhelmed the original volunteer pool, new volunteers at the hospices and Ward 5A are as likely to be straight older women as 25-year-old gay men.

"By about 1985, when we called for volunteers, people began to say, 'I'm already talking care of a friend with AIDS,' or 'I'm infected myself,' " recalls Cliff Morrison. So the definition of "community" had to broaden. The pitch was no longer "Do you have a lover with AIDS?" It was "Do you have a friend, a family member, a coworker?" The answer was often yes. "It's not as easy to recruit volunteers anymore," Morrison says, "but they're still coming."

In this new, expanded AIDS community, class frictions and charges of paternalism divide service providers—dissensions endemic to groups that compete for public funds. But the counterweight to ideology is a powerful one: the specter of the young and dying—not just young and dying gay men, or black men, or latino women with children, but people. And despite political and fundraising tensions, one premise is still shared: Waiting for good social services from existing government channels involves time that people with AIDS don't have.

In mid-March at a small church on 14th Street in D.C., Tim Rogers, coordinator of Whitman-Walker's all-volunteer massage therapy program, has gathered his colleagues to vent. The treatment room is too hot—no, too cold. The woman who washes the sheets needs an escort to the laundromat at night. The tape deck in the treatment room should have an automatic reverse. One fears this meeting, like those of so many nonprofits, will disintegrate in squabbles. But then a 26-year-old man with a hairline by chemo speaks up. "I don't know about the automatic reverse. I'm just pretty happy to be touched." The tape-deck debate is shelved.

Notebook 'em

"Knives over two inches will be confiscated."

These words welcome you to D.C.'s Department of Human Services intake center at 645 H Street NE, the mecca of D.C. residents in need. Past the sullen security guard, beyond the metal detector, is a room ripe with cigarette smoke and bodies. Three hundred or so, many of them children, wait hours to talk to a staff member. Social workers emerge periodically from cubicles, bellowing names.

Volunteers can animate superior services; hospitals can rewrite their rules. But it is here—in public welfare agencies—that the greatest obstacles to, and the greatest potential for, humane care for the disadvantaged lie. The gay community has left its mark here, too.

In D.C., a person who is unemployed, homeless, and disabled must wend her way through four differ-

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ent bureaucracies—the Department of Employment Services, the Office of Emergency Shelter, the Department of Public and Assisted Housing, and the Rehabilitation Administration—to get what is euphemistically called an entitlement. That structure, forbidding even to the healthy, is especially daunting to people with AIDS. In New York City, the clerks who process Medicaid ID cards wear rubber gloves to touch the *laminate* of clients with AIDS. Leaving a D.C. hospital after surgery, Kevin Dickerson went to DHS to try to locate a missing disability check. His social worker recoiled at his coughing, accusing him of trying to give her AIDS.

"They get nervous," Tony Harding explained mildly on one visit to DHS. "They forget to think." How, then, to make them think?

One way is with the threat of accountability. Waiting for a caseworker at DHS, Harding discreetly pointed out the other people with AIDS in the room—an identification made not by their lesions or emaciation, but by their notebooks. After every conversation, no matter how brief, many Whitman-Walker clients keep records: the name of the clerk, the time, the exact information provided.

Today, real estate ads in the city's gay newspaper quietly note, beneath descriptions of light-filled rooms, "Five percent of commission goes to services for people with AIDS."

In an arena where even basic Medicaid and welfare information can be wildly contradictory, where a paperwork error can get you evicted, the taking of names is a fundamental step in working the system: refusing to let the bureaucracy have no face. On the political level, that insistence plays out in the work of ACT-UP, which targets not institutions, but individuals—Anthony Fauci, Louis Sullivan, offending journalists. On the service level, the targets may be less symbolic—Ms. Smith for AZT Assistance, Mr. Jones for Medicaid—but the theory holds: A man with poised pencil at DHS can be as formidable a threat to a bureaucrat as a screaming legion at the FDA. Insulted in the emergency room at D.C. General a few weeks before his death—"What can we do?" snapped a clerk. "There's no cure for AIDS"—Tony Harding recorded her name and her comment in his little spiral notebook. Someone would be accountable.

In a better world, decent social services won't have to be extracted by intimidation; they'll be offered out of kindness and concern. But until then, Whitman-Walker has an insurance policy: a Rolodex full of D.C. government contacts to help make the system yield to the man. "If you walk into DHS saying, 'Hi, Whitman-Walker sent me, and they told me I need x, y, and z,' people are going to jump," says Adam Gale. "But if you walk in and say, 'Help me, please'—well, good luck."

Left behind in a plastic chair at DHS is evidence of how true that may be: an abandoned, half-filled application for food stamps, written in a childlike hand. Perhaps tired of waiting, perhaps confounded by the form, a 19-year-old woman with an hispanic surname and a one-year-old child has just slipped, one supposes, through the cracks.

Networks don't work miracles. Tony Harding spent all day, in two different offices five miles apart, trying to file for Medicaid and extend his AZT assistance. He was still waiting in the second office when the security guard expelled him at the 4:30 closing time. Along with three dozen other expelled people, he went home frustrated. But when he opened his apartment door, the phone was ringing. It was a D.C. government social worker who had waited past quitting time to reach him. She'd found the forms he needed. They filled them out together, on the phone, against the rules.

It is difficult, undeniably, to mine cosmic good out of 110,000 complicated deaths, Yet the AIDS network offers, if we want it, a small but potent suggestion. A united community effort *can* supplement—and even change—government's discouraging response to people in need. What it will take now, from the rest of us, is the same expanded sense of community that marks AIDS activism in 1991. That is, enough people willing to recognize that their self-interest lies not just in their backyards, but in their neighborhoods and even their cities—and then to translate that self-interest into efforts even government can't ignore. Impossible? A decade ago, it looked that way.

At Tony Harding's memorial service at a downtown club in February, two people slipped in after the early throng of mourners. It took a minute for Tony's friends to place their faces. *His D.C. government social worker. His doctor from D.C. General.* The possibilities, it seemed that night, were endless. □

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MEMO OF THE MONTH

Memorandum

Subject	Date
Attorney General Thornburgh's Visit	May 14, 1990

To

All Employees

From

Joyce J. George
United States Attorney

I would like to thank each of you for your work and commitment in making Attorney General Thornburgh's visit a huge success! I was so very proud!

Mr. Thornburgh was impressed with the extent to which we went to prepare for his visit. He complimented us on our team spirit, the briefing manual we prepared for him, the name tags we each wore, the supervisors' name plates, the appearance of the staff and attorneys, our housekeeping and our friendliness. I know he left here thinking that our office is one of the finest in the nation!

Thanks for your individual efforts. They paid off!

JJG:jas

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Bookshelves of the Vanities

Tom Wolfe, Jackie O, and other literati lavishly raise millions for the New York Public Library. So why don't they care that the neighborhood branches are dying?

by John Freeman Gill

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This winter, a *New Yorker* writer paid a visit to the modest St. Agnes branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL) and found the demise of Western civilization reflected in its ugly, modern door. This portal of knowledge on West 81st was soon to be closed on Saturdays, a casualty of New York City's budget crisis. As the writer sat "elbow on the table, chin in hand," it seemed only a matter of time before erudite tears would begin to flow.

The New York Public Library, that redoubtable emblem of Manhattan culture, has found itself in a bit of a pinch. And *The New Yorker* is not alone in sniffling. In a space of just two months, *The New York Times* has made two passionate editorial pleas for philanthropists to step forward and save the struggling branch libraries from the disastrous results of three years of city budget cuts.

The situation at the 82 branches—the front line of the city's educational system for both children and adults—is indeed grim. In January, forced by the city to reduce its budget for the third time this year, the NYPL announced 27 staff layoffs, the first since the dark days of 1976. As a result, 62 of the branches were compelled to shut their doors nearly half the week. Thousands of latchkey kids were left without a quiet place to read after school. Literacy programs, which taught 5,000 adults to read last year, were ravaged, as were English classes for immigrants.

As Mayor David Dinkins prepares draconian cuts to offset a $3.4 billion city deficit, many of New York's eight million library users must be thinking along the same lines as the *Times*: If only there were *some* way—just for the duration of the city's budget crisis—to supplement the library's public funding with private funding. If only there were some entity out there, with a huge accumulation of ready cash, that could help bail out the branches, which serve the city's poorest and least-educated readers. If only there were some way to keep the library doors open for the kids. . . .

Wake up, New York. The benefactor is under your nose. And his name is the New York Public Library. The NYPL, which serves the boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island, is among the Forbes 500 wealthiest nonprofit institutions in the country, with annual revenues of $155 million from private gifts, public funds, and an enormous endowment. Thanks to trustees and supporters like Brooke Astor, Tom Wolfe, Bill Blass, and Jackie O, that endowment surged from $148 million to $214 million between 1986 and 1989 (the last year for which records are available). Its executives are numerous and handsomely compensated. And "when it comes to scaring up cash," notes *New York* magazine, "nobody does it more stylishly than the New York Public Library."

So what's all this about branch closings? A little scrutiny suggests that the New York Public Library crisis isn't a symbol of civilization's decline, after all. What it really symbolizes is the myopia of tax-deductible New York charity. As they trade on their "public" name and falsely earned reputation as providers for the city's underprivileged, NYPL's renowned trustees and executives preside over a system *designed* to ensure that the proceeds of their lavish parties and the gifts of ladies bountiful won't trickle down to the kids.

On March 28, as library officials prepared to lay off scores of workers and close branch libraries for weeks or months at a time, NYPL came up with the funds to throw a party in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Virginia Woolf's suicide. Against a background of gorgeously carved Austrian oak woodwork, the invited guests—limited to trustees and Friends of the Library—could admire Charles Dickens's desk and an assortment of Woolf manuscripts from the library's collection, the largest assortment of original Woolfiana in the world.

It was a grand affair. As *The New York Times* reported, "tea flowed from a silver urn, waiters in tuxedos ferried a steady stream of shrimp perched on cucumbers and the luxurious like. Tiny posies graced their trays; yellow roses presided over reading tables. . . . 'This is the top, everything leads here,' declared Timothy S. Healy, library president."

Not too giddy to remember what a public library is supposed to be about, Reverend Healy took time out from the shrimp to speak of five-year-olds who at that moment might be reading comic books in one of the South Bronx branches, taking the tentative first step toward the liberation offered by great books. "If it takes," he pronounced, "they end up here." A lovely sentiment, but as he spoke those words, three of the 11 branch libraries in the south and south central Bronx regions were closed, and another four had eliminated morning hours.

What kind of message do parties like these send to the users of the beleaguered branches? "I don't feel we're creating a vicious symbol," says Healy from his office in the gargantuan Fifth Avenue mansion known as the Central Research Library. "The two are totally detached."

That, Reverend Healy, is precisely the problem.

John Freeman Gill is a New York writer.

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It's hard to question the fiscal priorities of the almost universally admired New York Public Library without appearing churlish. Yet the numbers are tough to ignore.

In the last year for which figures are available, NYPL reported a $12.2 million excess over operating costs. The library is quick to point out that $4 million of this money was invested in renovations and new equipment, but even so, that leaves $8.2 million. Just *half* that sum could have reestablished service at July 1990 levels, when more than half the branches were open five days a week. Instead, the library reinvested that money in its already well-endowed endowment.

To comprehend why neighborhood libraries struggle for survival while their parent institution sits on a heap of gold, one must understand that the NYPL is, in fact, two systems with two budgets: The 82 branches, which circulate materials, receive only 7 percent of their funds from private sources, with the rest coming from city, state, and federal agencies. NYPL's four nonlending research libraries receive the lion's share of private gifts. Consequently, whenever the city reduces its funding to the NYPL, only the neighborhood branches—the traditional outposts of learning for the hoi polloi—are hit hard. That explains why, when layoffs were announced in late January, virtually every NYPL staff member who received a pink slip worked in a branch library providing direct public service. In March, many of those librarian trainees, information assistants, and clerks were hired back—but only until the end of June, when even more drastic cuts are expected. No employees of the library's central administration, which accounts for 187 of NYPL's 2,181 full-time workers, lost their jobs; nor did any of the 202 managers and supervisors in the branches or the research libraries.

The librarians' union has repeatedly asked NYPL to protect jobs and branch services by dipping into the corporation's endowment, but President Healy has stated unequivocally that he will never do it. Even during the seventies' financial crisis, when the branch system lost one-third of its full-time staff and half of its service hours, the board of trustees refused to use the endowment to compensate for city cuts, pointing to the 1901 agreement by which Andrew Carnegie consented to build 65 branch libraries for New York City on the condition that the city maintain and operate the branches in perpetuity. As the city has grown and new branch libraries have been added, the Carnegie principle has been consistently applied. "We are afraid that if we start replacing public money with private money, the city will relinquish its responsibility for operating the branch library system," explains Herb Scher, a spokesman for the library. In other words, NYPL is willing to deprive New York's neighborhoods if that's what it takes to make the city honor its side of the 1901 agreement. President Healy even says as much. "I'm not responsible for the deprivation of people," he exclaims. "That's the city's business."

It's the Carnegie principle that ensures that the vast majority of new gifts to the library go not to branches like St. Agnes but to the rarified archives, which include special collections on Japanese prints, performing arts, and slavonic history. While $53 million of NYPL's endowment is completely unrestricted, all of its income goes reflexively to the archives, and virtually all of the library's sophisticated fundraising campaigns are conducted for their benefit. "In a sense," says Joan Gambeski, coordinator of NYPL's conservators program, "you'd have to go out of your way to donate to the branches." And you wouldn't get much help from the library.

Just five months before the January layoffs, an unrestricted $7.4 million donation arrived in the mail. It could have reversed the deterioration of the branches; it went instead into NYPL's treasure chest. *CFO* magazine, in a profile of NYPL Vice President for Finance Anthony Jiga, lauded the library's finance expert for the wily bookkeeping he employed when the anonymous donor sent the check with no strings attached:

> Such windfalls are, of course, always welcome, but they, too, can cause complications. "How, for example, can I convince the [state and federal] governments that we still need their money when I have a $7.4 million gift on the books?" asks Jiga. In discussions with his outside auditors, Jiga found an answer for this particular case: Enter the money on a separate line as a bequest and put it immediately into the endowment from which the library will draw investment earnings.

"That's almost an outrage, isn't it?" asks John Berry III, editor-in-chief of *Library Journal*, a trade magazine based in Manhattan. "It's bizarre thinking, and I'm not sure how they justify it, but they have repeatedly received gifts from people who say, 'The library saved my life,' and it turns out it's a library in downtown Manhattan—yet the money goes to the research library."

Dead poets society

On April 17, which happened to be National Library Day, some 80 people seated themselves in plastic folding chairs in the children's room of Harlem's George Bruce Library to celebrate the branch's 75th anniversary. A middle-aged author of young-adult books, the son of an illiterate father, took the micro-

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phone to tell the dozens of children in the audience how he gained mastery over language at the small desks in that very room.

But those were the old days. The supervising branch librarian was left to account for the new ones. Laurence Sherrill explained that although the American Library Association billed the occasion as the Night of 1,000 Stars, "our star is a little dim today." He lamented the need to shut down the library on Saturday and mourned the loss of "our very valued young-adult librarian," Linda Arcy.

Since the January cuts, hours in the George Bruce children's room have been curtailed and the 125th Street Poet's Posse, a group of 19 teenaged poets formed by Arcy, has disbanded. "In this neighborhood, it is particularly unkind to have to let go of your young-adult librarian," says Sherrill, one of the two librarians left to serve the throngs of kids who overrun George Bruce the four afternoons it is open. "She got them enthusiastic about reading."

Young adults aren't the only ones feeling the cuts. Outreach programs are now inaccessible to working adults because George Bruce is closed all weekend and open past 6 p.m. only one day a week. Both in the children's room and on the adult floor downstairs, the effects of this year's 37 percent cut in the library materials budget are also glaringly apparent. The Central Research Library's peerless collection of Woolfiana notwithstanding, the shelves of the George Bruce branch yield up only two paperbacks by the British author. A nearby section marked "Parenting" consists of 15 books. One of them, strangely, is *How to Grow a Young Reader*.

"I just can't say we're providing good or even standard service at this point," says Sherrill. "We lose one person and we can't operate."

If only the same could be said for the library's corporate structure, which is beginning to resemble that of a bank. In 1989, two vice presidents were enough to administrate NYPL. Today, that task requires the services of six, including one executive vice president and two senior vice presidents. This way, apparently, the library will have enough handsomely paid experts on hand to measure just how bad things are at branches like George Bruce.

The edifice complex

Today's library crisis—worse even than during the Great Depression, when libraries were open six days a week—comes, ironically, at the end of a record-breaking campaign to feed NYPL's endowment.

By the end of New York's fiscal crisis in the seventies, that endowment, created in 1895 by the merging of the privately funded Astor and Lenox reference libraries with the Tilden Trust, had become anemic. So in the eighties, NYPL began an inspired fundraising campaign, led by chairman and former Time Inc. CEO Andrew Heiskell and NYPL president Vartan Gregorian, to restore its health. Together, the two men exceeded their five-year goal of raising $307 million, largely by persuading wealthy New Yorkers that libraries are chic. By 1989, when Gregorian left to become president of Brown University, the regal edifice on Fifth Avenue was again glistening, right up to the 22 corinthian columns and the trademark stone lions. Best of all, the Park Avenue crowd had been convinced that books and free access to them were things it should care about.

For some, though, the primary concern was not so much Great Books as Great Parties. As *Vogue* explained in 1988, "There was a time not long ago when an invitation to a charity event was viewed as a slightly better class of junk mail. . . . Things seem to be changing for the better, if the two parties held in May for the New York Public Library and the Central Park Conservancy are any indication. These are the heavy metal of social events, and they set the standard by which all other galas are judged."

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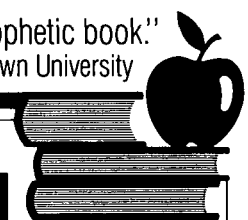

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At the institution's Ten Treasures Dinner, a Who's Who of New York society created *tableaux* around precious objects from the library's collection. Cowboywear designer Ralph Lauren, for example, built a giant wigwam at the foot of a marble stair to showcase 19th-century drawings of native Americans; Bill Blass created "Voyages on Paper" using swatches from the rare-map collection. In *Vogue*'s view, these decorations were "perhaps unmatched since Francis I entertained Henry VIII on the Field of the Cloth of Gold."

Of course, the fundraisers were handsomely rewarded, too. IRS documents show that Gregorian, working only 10 months, earned $247,469 in salary and bonuses in 1989, nearly twice what the governor of New York makes. "You're looking at an executive on the level of a president of a major university," says library trustee Conrad K. Harper, president of New York City's bar association. "It was astounding to us that he was willing to come to us at a salary well below what he ought to have been paid." In 1988, Gregorian's $37,570 benefit package alone was more than the starting salary of a supervising branch librarian. In fact, his total compensation of $300,000 was roughly the same as the cost of running the George Bruce branch for one year. But *someone* had to host all those parties.

Little orphan annexes

Probably the most famous of the charity galas is the annual Literary Lions dinner, for which guests like Oscar de la Renta and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis pay up to $1,500 to hobnob with renowned authors. One Literary Lion, who calls the event "a chic shebang," describes the transition between the cocktail and the banquet portions of the meal one year: "A group of us were standing around drinking among the columns when a bunch of young people came out in tuxedos and blew a fantastic flourish of trumpets—and that was the call for dinner. I don't think I'd ever been to a party where they trumpet you to dinner."

Now Jackie—couldn't you and your friends make sure *some* of the revenue generated by these lavish events goes to the branches? John Berry, the *Library Journal* editor, is one of the few who'll broach the subject. "I don't think this very elitist crowd who are trustees of the public library should receive every penny, even though they raise much of it," he offers. "The people who run the public library are a substantial distance from the realities of life in the branches, which are the life-blood of the city."

As it happens, the Mid-Manhattan branch at 40th Street and Fifth Avenue is quite close to the lionized research library. From a window inside the branch, you can literally watch the red carpet being rolled out for the Literary Lions extravaganza. "They used to have librarians attend this affair," says librarian Mark Rosenzweig. "But this year they eliminated the librarians altogether."

Still, the public library has taken one important step to aid the branches. Its new Adopt-A-Branch program, a public-private partnership announced this March, gives private donors the opportunity to supplement but not supplant city funds with a $500,000 gift. Two Bronx libraries have been "adopted," and NYPL is looking for foster parents for two more branches in East Harlem and the East Village. But the program depends entirely on new donations; endowment interest and other surplus funds will not be touched.

Raising new funds for the branches may be tough going, for it flies in the face of high society's philanthropic inclinations. "Most people who would give us this kind of enormous gift would be interested in the research library," explains Susan Linder, assistant coordinator for services to the Friends of the Library. And, as Linder acknowledges, library officials encourage the trend.

About a decade ago, as the library was recovering from its fiscal crisis, the owner of Coach Leatherware, the purse company, gave NYPL a grant to keep the St. Agnes branch—the very branch that made *The New Yorker* go misty—open on Saturdays. Today, that sort of donation might be resisted by library officials. "I think the library administration is a little more savvy as to the ramifications of this sort of thing," explains Linder. "We raise money for nonbudgetary requirements of the branches, like programs or certain segments of book collections. The library is concerned that the city will say, 'Well, if you're so good at raising money, why don't you do the whole thing?' "

If even the conscientious rich find it difficult to help the struggling branches, it is probably time to reexamine the terms under which the city of New York has retained the NYPL as its tax-exempt cultural contractor—to ask why the presiding principles in a time of crisis are ones of turf, not kids. Yet as branches in the Bronx and Harlem and the Lower East Side close, no one—not Wolfe nor Astor nor Blass nor even David Dinkins—wants to question NYPL's priorities. Instead of convening to challenge the Carnegie principle, instead of using excess funds to keep the branches open, the library's elite trustees seem content to let these critical outposts of education bleed.

As an April 4 *Times* editorial observed, "Government cannot escape its responsibility. But the spirit of philanthropy that created the libraries is urgently needed to keep them alive." Here, here. So let's start with the New York Public Library itself. □

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Cliffhanging

How the consummate counsel came to need a lawyer

by Jonathan Alter

In the drawing rooms of Georgetown, the conversations now take a particularly predictable path. How sad, how terribly sad, the hostesses say, almost in unison, as their guests nod and cluck. After such a distinguished career, how could Clark Clifford get himself into such dreadful trouble? After all, until this year, Clifford was the personification of the shrewd Washington insider, the last of the wise men, confidante of Democratic presidents, blah, blah, blah.

It's mostly true, actually, as his long-awaited memoirs* suggest. Clifford played at least a walk-on role in almost everything that was compelling about Washington from the late forties to the end of the seventies. During the Truman administration, when more momentous events occurred in a month's time than might now take place in five or 10 years, he was central, as he was during the debate over Vietnam. There are some genuine historical insights in this book, some fascinating accounts of how government really works. But these days, Clifford's role in Washington history isn't half as interesting as his role on a single bank board. Now the search is on for some answers to the Clark Clifford riddle.

For Clifford (who spoke into a tape recorder) and Richard Holbrooke, a former assistant secretary of state under Jimmy Carter (who wrote the book and gets almost a co-byline), the timing is horrendous. But the coincidence of the scandal and the memoir may help provide some clues to Clifford's motives—and to why it took the rest of us so long to be suspicious of them.

For those who missed "60 Minutes" and the rest of the coverage (*The New York Times* has been especially skimpy with the details), Clifford's troubles involve the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), a sleazy Arab-

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**Counsel to the President.* Clark Clifford. *Random House, $25.00.*

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owned bank that has been accused of laundering drug money, among myriad smelly practices. In the early eighties, BCCI couldn't get regulatory approval to operate in the United States, so the owners secretly bought First American Bank and installed Clifford and one of his law partners, Robert Altman, as chairman and president, granting them loans to buy hugely lucrative stock. Clifford now claims that he presided over First American for nearly a decade without knowing that it was really controlled by BCCI. Nobody, of course, believes this. Reduced to admitting he played either the crook or the fool, Clifford is opting for the latter.

He recently hired a criminal lawyer; an indictment has to be considered at least a fair possibility. In the book, Clifford mentions his bank activities in only one sentence. But understanding that the scandal could not go completely unaddressed, Random House recently sent out a hastily added footnote. In it, Clifford writes of the pain the episode is causing him and puts a predictable and wholly inadequate gloss of innocence over it. Midway through the addition, though, lies an inadvertent sign of just how difficult this matter has become. In describing the terms under which he became chairman of First American in 1982, Clifford writes: "On the absolute assurance that the investors would not interfere with First American operations, I accepted. . . ." Curiously, in the typescript draft of the chapter sent to reviewers, the word "absolute" is crossed out. The lawyers, obviously, are already very much on the case.

Washington isn't as interested in the details of BCCI as in the riddle. Was Clifford's age an answer? Perhaps he was a victim of octogenarian forgetfulness. The younger Clifford would never have stood for such shenanigans, say the rationalizers. As for the money, well, he couldn't have done it for that, right? The man was already a multimillionaire.

Unfortunately for Clifford, the age excuse won't wash. As longtime readers of *The Washington Monthly* know, this is not the first time Clifford has played the fool. If he'd only known the truth about BCCI, he says now, he would have done the right thing. But precedent is against him. The last time he stared down a scam, he ignored universally recognized professional ethics and did nothing.

In 1970, Clifford, still in his prime, served on the board of the National Bank of Washington, then controlled by the United Mine Workers (UMW). At the time, the UMW was run by Tony Boyle, who was widely suspected and eventually convicted of arranging the murder of Jock Yablonski, his predecessor as president of the union. The *Monthly* revealed that the miners' pension fund was deposited in the bank in a noninterest-bearing account, meaning that the money benefited not the black-lung victims but the bank executives and union bosses. After the story appeared, Clifford called the editor of this magazine to say he was shocked, *shocked* to hear of it. As he should have been: As a lawyer, unless he was incompetent, he had to know perfectly well the trustees' fiduciary responsibility to the miners—to ensure that their pension fund was invested to their maximum benefit. But even though he knew all the facts and could no longer maintain the innocence he has persistently claimed in the BCCI scandal, he didn't fulfill that responsibility: He declined to blow the whistle, quietly leaving the board a year or so later.

So much for age. The problem with the money argument is that it's used any time someone rich gets into trouble. (The amount of money Michael Milken was convicted over, for instance, was trivial compared to his net worth.) Clifford might have pooh-poohed the money motive to Mike Wallace—he took the banking assignment as a challenge, he says—but, in truth, money is always part of the challenge. What begins as a practical need becomes

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a psychological necessity. Clifford writes that he left a position of tremendous power in the Truman administration in 1950 in part because his savings from his years practicing law in St. Louis were depleted. He doesn't cite any figures, but he probably calculated that he just needed to sock away a couple of hundred thousand, recharge his batteries, and return to public service. He writes that by 1961, when he headed the Kennedy transition team, he had made the decision that to help staff the administration and then take a cabinet job would be improper. What he doesn't mention is that, if he took a cabinet job, he would have had to miss out on becoming a multimillionaire. By the seventies, Clifford no doubt had friends worth tens of millions. Why shouldn't he be worth that, too?

It wasn't that Clifford was greedier than everyone else, but that he helped make it respectable—even desirable—to profit from the access game. He recounts President Kennedy's joke at an Alfalfa Club banquet in 1961. "You can't do anything for me [in terms of an appointment]," the new president quotes Clifford as saying. "But if you insist, the only thing I would ask is to have the name of my law firm printed on the back of the one-dollar bill." That Kennedy would tell a joke like this suggests how new the whole game was. It seems so natural now, but only in the postwar era did law firms like Arnold & Porter (Abe Fortas's firm) and Clifford & Warnke begin trading on their good names and government experience for big profit in the Washington legal world. It's true that the rise of the Washington law firm was also a response to the increasing complexity of government, but the real money was still (though the lawyers would die before admitting it) in the door-opening: in the client's ability to say, "I've got Clark Clifford on this one."

Admittedly, practicing law is a lot more boring than advising presidents, but it's remarkable how little space in this huge book is devoted to Clifford's main occupation. After all, Clifford spent only six years working full-time for the government (five as a counsel to Harry Truman and one year, 1968, as Lyndon Johnson's secretary of defense). Otherwise, although he contributed occasional advice to presidents on critical issues and personnel choices, he spent the vast bulk of his time in Washington as a lawyer. Except for descriptions of Clifford representing Senator John Kennedy in threatening suit against ABC for questioning Kennedy's authorship of *Profiles in Courage* (among other matters) and defending Bert Lance in 1977, Clifford's law practice is almost invisible.

Loopholier than thou

But the few mentions of his practice do hold some clues to the Clifford riddle. For instance, shortly after starting his practice in 1950, he received two phone calls. The first was from Phillips Petroleum, which became a big client. The second was from Howard Hughes, whom he never met but represented in Washington for years. To Hughes, Clifford recited a little speech that he says he gave so many times over the next 40 years that his associates could repeat it by heart:

> I look forward to our association. But before we proceed, there is one point I must make clear. I do not consider that this firm will have any influence of any kind here in Washington. I cannot, and I will not, represent any client before the president or before any of his staff. If you want influence, you should consider going elsewhere. What we can offer you is an extensive knowledge of how to deal with the government on your problems. We will be able to give you advice on how best to present your position to the appropriate departments and agencies of the government.

This sounds nice, but except for refraining from directly lobbying the president of the United States—which is pointless and embarrassing—it bears no relationship to the way Clark Clifford or any other Washington powerbroker really operates. The client speech is worse than a convenient fiction that both parties recognize as such. It is a distillation of everything that is phony about power in the capital in the second half of the 20th century. The denial of "any influence of any kind here in Washington" is Orwellian in its boldness. To his credit, Clifford at least has some sense of shame about influence-peddling. He realizes—just by giving that speech—that what he does for a living is not entirely honorable, which is more than can be said for most of today's practitioners. No doubt he tried to insulate himself from the grubby details of such peddling by letting his partners and subordinates act in his name as much as possible—the name, of course, wedging the door open in the first place. Still, Clifford's implicit admission of shame does not justify how he spent the bulk of his career.

Perhaps sensing that, Clifford makes a stab at further justification. He writes several times that he sees himself primarily as an advocate; that, accordingly, he turned down a few chances to be on the Supreme Court. In describing the importance of advocacy, Clifford recounts the philosophy of his friend, the late Edward Bennett Williams:

> Every defendant has the right—and his lawyer an *obligation*—to test the law to the limits to get the best possible outcome from the courts. That was what made the law work. To the lawyer, there was no such thing as a loophole; if the law was flawed, the legislative branch

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could change it—but unless and until they did, it was the law and applied equally to all. Ed respected, even loved, the law. It was, he and I both believed, what kept us a civilized nation.

This is clue number two. *To the lawyer, there was no such thing as a loophole.* What Clifford seems to be saying is that lawyers have the right—no, the obligation—to skirt the line of the law as closely as they can. They are not supposed to admit—even to themselves—that they are doing so; that would be admitting that they were exploiting a "loophole" rather than acting appropriately. This is about as clear a statement of the fundamental amorality of the Washington law practice as one is likely to find. It's almost as if Clifford were saying that lawyers have a duty to do whatever they can get away with.

It would be so much easier if Clifford were fundamentally a bad guy and wrong on the great issues of the day. But he was right—on civil rights under Truman, on Joe McCarthy, and on Vietnam, both in 1965, when he and George Ball were the only insiders arguing against escalation, and in 1968, when he was a dovish defense secretary. (He was relatively hawkish in between.)

Many of his stories from that period are memorable and evocative (if relentlessly self-promoting): playing poker with Truman and Winston Churchill en route to Fulton, Missouri, for Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain" speech (all the Truman poker tales, including one in which Chief Justice Fred Vinson calls the president a son of a bitch, are delightful); battling George Marshall, who vigorously opposed U.S. recognition of the new state of Israel in 1948; laughing with Truman following the astonishing 1948 upset because certain "supporters" claimed their pre-election endorsement letters had been lost in the mail. Clifford also discloses the peculiar story of how a newly elected JFK sent him to talk Kennedy's father out of insisting that Bobby be named attorney general. ("I'm going to see to it that Bobby gets the same chance we gave Jack," Joseph Kennedy told Clifford in settling the matter.) Clifford explains how Johnson's famous hatred of Bobby extended past RFK's death, when LBJ refused to have the government pay for a permanent grave site.

The good stuff about Clifford is precisely the problem. His public service and tremendous charm made his approach to practicing law not just acceptable, but enviable—a model for generations of young lawyers flocking to Washington. In that sense, the staining of this Washington legend, however traumatic for himself and his family and friends, is actually healthy for everyone else. By stripping Clark Clifford's approach of its respectability, the BCCI scandal may help us see influence-peddling—and Washington's celebration of it—for what it really is. □

National Endowment for Administrators

The NEA's real problem isn't crucifixes in urine—it's bureaucrats in Dubuque

by Liza Mundy

"The Arts Endowment has never called a great artist into being," declares National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chairman John Frohnmayer in the NEA's glossy 1989 annual report. It seems an odd and ambiguous declaration for the chairman of the nation's leading arts agency to make—one that clearly resonated with the wrong faction during the NEA debate of '89 and '90. Thousands of cranky constituents wrote Congress protesting that their tax dollars had gone to support artists they had never heard of, but were pretty sure they disliked: names like Andres Serrano, Robert Mapplethorpe, David Wojnarowicz, Shawn Eichman, Annie Sprinkle. Not a Titian or a Faulkner in this crowd, the citizenry suspected—not even a Fragonard or a Ford Madox Ford.

Liza Mundy is senior editor of Washington City Paper.

But now that the dust has settled on the Mapplethorpes and the NEA has survived reauthorization for another three years, we have the time to parse Frohnmayer's words anew. The chairman's point was not that the NEA prefers to fund undistinguished painters, photographers, poets, and potters, but rather that only a minuscule amount (7.6 percent) of NEA funding goes directly to artists. To make this point abundantly clear, the Endowment is distributing a "fact sheet" emphasizing that—contrary to rumors fomented by the Right, none of the above-mentioned artists received *direct* NEA funding for his controversial exhibit.

Rest assured, America: During its first quarter century, the NEA has doled out the lion's share of its

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budget to arts *organizations*—symphonies, dance companies, presenters, theaters, cultural centers, and various "arts alliances." In other words, you may not have underwritten Serrano's rent or Sprinkle's sex toys, but you did contribute $4,700 to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles "to support a comprehensive survey of security needs at the museum's Temporary Contemporary facility."

Feel better about shelling out $17,500 to Dimensions Dance Theater in Oakland, California, "to support the salary of the executive director"? How about $5,000 to the Society of Folk Arts and Culture, Inc., in Eutaw, Alabama, "to support the salaries of an outreach coordinator and a clerical assistant, and other administrative expenses associated with the implementation of programs that preserve and document the cultural traditions of West Alabama"?

Or—last, but not least—a whopping $50,000 to New York's Theater Projects Consultants, Inc. "for a cooperative agreement to conduct a feasibility study for the development of performance facilities within the International Cultural and Trade Center in Washington, D.C."?

In truth, one of the NEA's most enduring accomplishments has been to save a considerable and ever-growing number of consultants, development directors, grant writers, and other professionals from lives of alcoholism, misery, and obscurity—a possibility that accounts for the considerable self-interest that permeates *Public Money and the Muse**, a collection of essays that grew out of several seminars attended by these very people. According to the list at the end of the book, only four bona fide artists were among the 73 attendees at eight seminars sponsored by the American Assembly of Columbia University to consider the fate of government-financed arts in America; the rest were arts administrators, professors of arts administration, directors of foundations, and arts patrons—in other words, the prime architects and beneficiaries of today's cultural policy.

Serrano rap

A collection that purports to broaden the arts debate beyond the narrow focus of the 1989-90 obscenity discussion, *Public Money and the Muse* falls far short of illumination. While the authors do raise some compelling criticisms of the NEA and American cultural policy in general—its elitism, its cliquishness, its conservatism—nearly all conclude with a rote paragraph wistfully harking back to the NEA they knew and loved before Congress began obsessing about sex. (The 1991 reauthorization bill declares that NEA money will be withdrawn from any work judged obscene by a court of law—a milder version of the 1990 bill, which forbade the funding of any work the Endowment or Congress deemed obscene.) None of the 12 contributors is willing to acknowledge that the federal government has no obligation to fund the arts, for example. Nor do the authors waste time showing the skeptic why, obligation or no obligation, the federal government might *want* to do so.

To understand the origin of this vested interest, it helps to understand the funding structure of the NEA and the intricate web of arts agencies to which it has given rise. The Endowment was created in 1965 to help resuscitate the country's great arts institutions. At the time, production costs for museums, symphony orchestras, dance companies, and other "national treasures" were escalating faster than ticket income, with no respite in sight. The NEA's aim was to encourage these institutions to make up for the growing "income gap" by culling charitable contributions from foundations, corporations, moneyed individuals, and government sources. Toward this goal, the NEA requires that all grants except those to artists must be matched by other contributed dollars on at least a one-to-one basis. Thus, while the NEA's current budget falls short of $200 million, the Endowment calculates that the matching mechanism leverages as much as $1.3 billion in private funds. None of it goes to rank amateurs, either; the NEA restricts its money to "professional" artists and staff, as do many private donors who use the Endowment's imprimatur as their criterion for selection.

At the same time, the Endowment has spawned an enormous family of smaller arts agencies throughout the country, all with their own staffs and similar funding mechanisms. In every state plus D.C., American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Marianas is an arts council that, like the NEA, selects its grantees through "peer review panels" and then requires that those grants be approved by a council of political appointees.

Of course, these councils also serve to siphon off NEA money. Currently, state agencies receive 20 percent of NEA funds (by the end of this year, this figure will rise to 35 percent) and draw additional money from state legislatures and private sources. Below these are thousands of local arts agencies, which help communities with amorphous goals like "long-range cultural planning"; above them, believe it or not, are regional arts agencies, which assist state agencies in putting together tours. The result is a bewildering bureaucracy with lots of staff but only an indirect connection to the creative process. It comes as no surprise, then, that while the number of artists in the

**Public Money and the Muse: Essays on Government Funding for the Arts.* Stephen Benedict, ed. *Norton, $22.95.*

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U.S. has doubled under NEA's tenure, the number of nonprofit arts organizations has quadrupled.

Yet when congressmen criticize the NEA, their targets are almost always the artists. Fifteen years ago, for instance, a proto-uproar was sparked when an irate representative discovered that an author had received a $500 NEA grant for a poem containing one word. Still, nothing could have prepared the Endowment for the day in 1989 when Senator Jesse Helms discovered that NEA money had gone to fund a traveling exhibit of something called "Piss Christ" in his home state of North Carolina.

In his overview of government and the arts, Milton Cummings Jr., carefully traces the government-artist conflict from 1817 to the Helms era. Yet after summarizing nearly 200 years of arts tensions, Cummings blithely concludes that the programs of the NEA have "taken root," and that the institution has contributed to a "remarkable flowering of the arts . . . in the United States over the last generation."

The same myopia permeates many of the essays, including Kathleen Sullivan's piece on the First Amendment issues involved in the dispute and Paul DiMaggio's study of the differences between the NEA and state arts councils. (They do much of the same work, DiMaggio observes, and they should be kept just as they are.) And even the most critical exploration—"Cultural Equity," jointly written by Robert Garfias and Gerald D. Yoshitomi—never really reevaluates the NEA's role in American art.

These two authors portray the NEA as clubby and outdated; they suggest that the NEA perpetuates public suspicion of logrolling and incest on NEA "peer review" panels—grants from which have been issued to stepmothers, friends, brothers, and panel members themselves. Pointing out that arts attendance dropped during the eighties, Garfias accuses the NEA of "propping up organizations that are serving dwindling audiences." Yoshitomi argues that the "matching funds" clause stymies groups (often minority groups) with limited access to foundations and wealthy benefactors. Yet these authors don't want to dispense with federal funding; they simply would like to see a more accessible NEA.

In part because of objections like Garfias's and Yoshitomi's, it seems difficult to find a good reason for the federal government to serve as the employer of first resort for the arts, channeling most of the resources into the healthiest organizations—particularly when so few Americans note positive results. (At the height of the congressional debate, anti-Endowment letters to Congress outnumbered pro-NEA missives 16 to 1.) It's also hard to sanction a system that not only breeds arts administrators but compels them to cater to wealthy patrons rather than benefiting the rest of us, who would enjoy concerts and the theater more often if tickets were cheaper.

What would happen, one wonders, if a genuinely drastic change took place: say, if the federal government funded more artists directly, as it did in the thirties, lowering their fees and production costs—and thus making the arts affordable for more people? Or if the NEA required its grantees to match NEA money to ticket income, spurring companies to attract new audiences rather than new patrons? What would happen if the NEA no longer required matching funds at all, leaving itself open to all comers, established or obscure? What would happen if the feds got out of the arts business altogether—or if an entirely new model were created?

In his essay, Yoshitomi writes that today's is a "different America than the one in which the NEA was created," indicating that the time has come to draft a new design. But neither he nor any of the other contributors makes a concrete, imaginative proposal. Presumably, the forces behind *Public Money and the Muse*—nurtured on the present funding system—find a substantive shift in the current system too unnerving to contemplate. After all, anything that alters the NEA might presage the end of arts administration as we know it. Who knows, it might even produce a great artist. □

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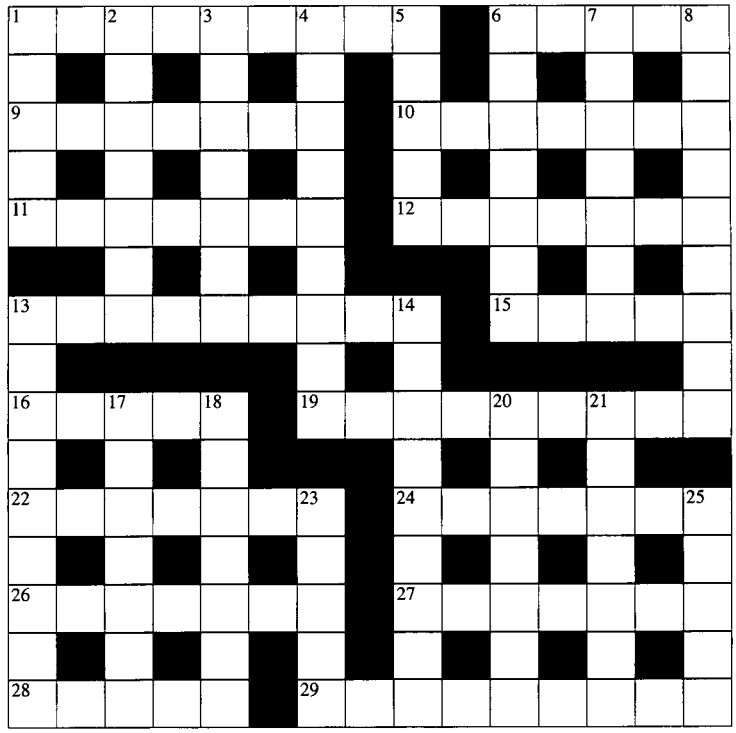
POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.



ACROSS

1. Leader hands identification in today. (9)
6. Programs are a cinch if returned around end of April. (5)
9. Throw measure into Mexican river to attack. (3,4)
10. Rome rebuilt after the proposition. (7)
11. Recent leader puts on the dog in Canada. (7)
12. Hero of Greek mythology and caught in dirty look. (7)
13. Hang shirt in the wind for big win. (9)
15. Privileged few with Reagan would be minuscule unit. (5)
16. Made a sort of funny tribute. (5)
19. Choice train in portion of tract. (9)
22. Firm sign belonging to female slowpokes. (7)
24. Carried and married in new deli. (7)
26. Olive drab revue presented late. (7)
27. One of the bigger Jones boys puts spree before everything. (3,4)
28. Result of idly wandering around center of Salerno. (5)
29. Cast adrift sly Washington VIP. (5,4)

DOWN

1. Capitalist investor appeared in paper otherwise. (5)
2. Returning congressman in Rome is former leader there. (7)
3. Hotel with new sign for sport periods. (7)
4. 200 Moonies demonstrated for study of finance. (9)
5. Destroy the old Texas Alamo literature in the West. (5)
6. Give sign of first philanthropist distributing grease. (7)
7. One game to shorten? (7)
8. Benefactor displaying arts mania. (9)
13. Retry riot management for turf. (9)
14. Medal with degree of excellence for conservative figure. (9)
17. Get larger race, etc. (7)
18. Roosevelt finished and moved in a definite direction. (7)
20. Eastern cohort produced smoke. (7)
21. State another one of the Jones boys. (7)
23. Cabinet member in the flesh, as it were. (5)
25. Cameraman's toy? (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography. Kitty Kelley. *Simon & Schuster, $24.95.* Breathes there a soul inside the beltway who has not heard about *this* book? The 528-page tome, which spiraled instantly to the top of the best-seller list, has been trumpeted on the front page of *The New York Times*; satirized by Garry Trudeau; criticized on the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek*; disputed by *People*; and rehashed on every major and minor talk show in the country.

What's caught the public's imagination is a lurid tale of conspicuous consumption and clandestine affairs—a portrait of a two-faced harridan who reigned at 1600 Pennsylvania like Marie Antoinette. Indeed, this unauthorized biography has got decadence to burn. But to Kelley's—and Nancy's—credit, it is also a study of a dealmaker of remarkable proportions: a master of manipulation who, once she paid her dues, made sure she'd never again have to pay her own way.

Forget Ol' Blue Eyes. The Nancy we see here is the antithesis of the nooner-inclined romantic—the relentlessly acquisitive bitch. Throughout her life, she chafed at paying for the smallest details, even toilet paper, yet when she decamped from the White House, it took nine U.S. Air Force transport planes to remove her worldly possessions. Through a series of canny business transactions, a woman born near the railroad tracks in Queens had parlayed a civil servant's salary into half a century of style.

Nancy had an instinct for the deal early on: selling her personalized hand towels to another Nancy at Smith; scheming as a starlet to catch the preoccupied president of the Screen Actors Guild. But as she aged, she traded the small-time hustle for more elaborate moves. In 1956, while her husband was the spokesman for General Electric, the company agreed to electrify the couple's home in exchange for publicity. G.E. invested $100,000 worth of equipment—a retractable canopy roof, a small theater, a heated swimming pool with underwater lights, even electric drapes—in the house, making it a model of high-voltage living. This set in motion a lifelong pattern of trading promotion for possessions. In time, freebies would become her way of life.

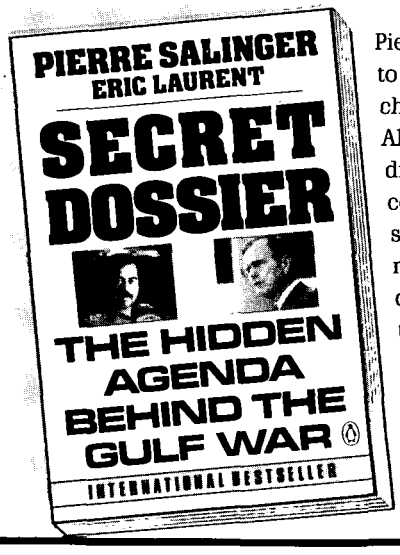
After Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California, Nancy was appalled by the governor's mansion, particularly its tacky purple chairs. So Reagan's kitchen cabinet bought and lavishly furnished a Sacramento house for the pair—and then donated 11 acres to the state for the construction of a new, $1.4 million mansion (a structure more suited to Nancy's tastes). Years later, the same group ponied up megabucks to acquire a Bel Air estate for the Reagans' retirement. Not satisfied with the address—she claimed the number 666 signified Satan—Nancy had the offending numerals switched to 668.

And then, of course, there were the clothes. Adolpho suits. Galanos gowns. Solid gold jewelry from Bulgari. Perfumes, watches, pocketbooks with $2,500 price tags—gifts or "borrowings" all. Nancy didn't even pay to dye her hair that trademark mousy brown. Clairol flew a hairdresser to the White House every three weeks to do the chemical treatments.

Nor was Nancy's dealmaking restricted to material goods. As Kelley tells it, Nancy was the *éminence grise* behind the president, convincing him to dump advisers from William Casey to Donald Regan to one hapless White House photographer. A moderate in a collegium of conservatives, she left her mark on policy, too: urging her husband to ditch the concept of the Soviet Union as "evil empire" and ensuring that his inner circle stayed loyal and deferential. Most of this she managed with the appropriate obliqueness—using threats and rumors to their maximum effect.

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

The most crucial encounters of the Gulf War took place before Operation Desert Storm began.



Pierre Salinger, press secretary to President Kennedy and now chief foreign correspondent of ABC News, and Eric Laurent, the distinguished French journalist, combine forces to reveal the shocking, illuminating, and never-before-told story of the diplomatic maneuvers that led to the Gulf War.

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But what Nancy really wanted wasn't political power. She craved an entree into high society, which she went after with as much energy as she'd gone after Ronnie. She set her sights on the frivolous faces who adorned the pages of *Women's Wear Daily*—the rich, the well connected, and the royal—and eventually had them buying clothes for her. She studied and emulated Betsy Bloomingdale and Brooke Astor, and flirted with the omnipotent Katharine Graham. She assiduously courted Jackie Onassis, admiring her style. Barbara Bush, on the other hand, wasn't worth the effort.

At the end of her eight heady years, Nancy resented turning over the White House to the "whiny" George Bush and his dowdy wife. "If it hadn't been for us, they wouldn't even be here," she caviled to a friend. Of course, if it hadn't been for Nancy, the Reagans probably wouldn't have been there, either, in all their borrowed style.

The shrewd maneuvers, the bitchiness, the uncanny knack for turning publicity into personal windfalls—no wonder the similarly talented Kelley was so intrigued. If the Reagan era hadn't happened, Kelley's gossipy account wouldn't have stood a chance. But today, thanks in no small part to Nancy, designer-studded deep dish is the coin of the realm. Upon finishing this book one can only conclude that Nancy, no slouch in the dishing department herself, would have enjoyed every morsel had it been written about anyone but her.

—*Sandra McElwaine*

Cold Warrior: James Jesus Angleton—The CIA's Master Spyhunter. Tom Mangold. *Simon & Schuster, $22.95.* There he was, suddenly, in the middle of a meeting in the director's office, unbidden, unannounced. A tall, dark-suited, stooped, and very lean man—a man who seemed to slide rather than walk. There would be a pause, and the director would say to the others present, "Would you mind clearing out of here for just a minute? I want to have a word with Jim."

The late James J. Angleton, chief of counterintelligence for the CIA, was much feared, partly because the only thing his eyes revealed behind those thick glasses was a contempt for most other men, and partly because Angleton knew things about those other men that were, if not necessarily damning, personal and private.

For example, I said to my wife one Sunday evening as we were getting into bed, "You know, it's cruel the way Bedell Smith [Director, CIA] treats Allen [Dulles, Deputy Director, CIA], and it's demeaning. Here's a fine mind and a highly respected lawyer being treated like an office boy." And then I mimicked Bedell Smith with a roar: "Dulles, God damn you, get in here!"

Next morning Allen Dulles, whom I revered, greeted me without the customary, businesslike nod. He leaned back in his chair and reached for his pipe, gesturing to me to sit down. "Jim tells me you think Bedell and I don't get along."

He then repeated word for word what I had said to my wife in our bedroom.

There was another reason why James Angleton was feared. He knew better than anybody who the mole might be: which of your secretaries, your agents abroad, your couriers, your friends and colleagues, your "covert contacts" had been touched or might have been touched by the KGB.

He knew more than that. He knew the Soviet plan for the ultimate submission of the United States. He had all those files in his office dating back to the early twenties. He pored over them day and night. Nobody else had access, which made it useless to argue with him. "You don't know. What if I told you that the Polish military attaché in Belgium had breakfast last Wednesday with the Chinese ambassador?" He peered through his glasses, point proven. To argue with Angleton on even general topics—Russian intentions, Chinese intentions, Tito's defection—might make *you* suspect. So there was no argument.

Now, four years after Angleton's death, the myth lies shattered into a thousand pieces of nonsense, and the fear has gone with the myth. There was no mole. There was no grand KGB plan for taking over. Those secret files have been opened and read. Suspicion no longer rules. We can go back now—and I think we are back—to the business of running an intelligence agency.

I put down this book by Tom Mangold, a veteran BBC reporter who has done an extraordinarily diligent job, with a sense of great relief—but not at the fact that James Angleton's reign is over. That came to an end when Bill Colby first removed Angleton from his powerful role as the CIA's sole contact with Israel's Mossad and later fired him as chief of counterintelligence. All of those other Angleton myths—that the Chinese-Russian split was a fake, that the Yugoslav defection was a fake, that Averell Harriman, Harold Wilson, Olof Palme, Armand Hammer, Henry Kissinger, and Lester Pearson were Soviet agents—were laughed out of general credibility long ago. My sense of relief is that, thanks to Mangold's efforts, it's all out now, for everybody to read, particularly the men and women of the CIA who are dedicated to keeping their country informed, believing that information means safety and might also lead to wise policy. It's important for them to know what Angleton did to the CIA. But it's equally important that they understand how Angleton happened.

What led a young man of high intelligence, excellent education, and enormous capacity for hard work into a kind of paranoid insanity? Perhaps it was the work itself. Mangold argues that "the very qualities that make a good counterintelligence officer—a suspicious mind, a love of complexity and detail, and an ability to detect conspiracies—are also the qualities most likely to corrode natural intelligence and objective judgment." That seems sound. But Mangold suggests another, more intriguing possibility—the Kim Philby connection.

The two agents met in London in 1943, when Philby was a rising star in the British MI6. Six years later, when Philby was assigned to Washington as a liaison to the CIA, Angleton, fresh from a successful career running down fascist stay-behind cells in Italy, had also become a rising star. The two men spent hours together in official meetings, dutifully summarized in Angleton's memoranda for the files, and they spent many more hours in long, frequent, bibulous luncheons. In 1951, when Philby was sent home under suspicion after Burgess and Maclean defected, Angleton simply

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refused to believe his old friend could be guilty of treason. He held to his opinion until, 12 years later, Moscow triumphantly announced Philby's defection. Angleton was shattered. The betrayal grew inside him, Mangold suggests, like a malignancy.

What had Angleton revealed to Philby during those many meetings and liquor-laden lunches? Did he tell Philby of the projected parachute drop into Albania and thus doom the parachutists to the hail of bullets that awaited them? Did he tell him of other operations and plans?

All that Mangold knows—and we now know—is that Angleton's Philby file has disappeared. All those carefully dictated memoranda of conversations, gone. So we are entitled to wonder how a man in charge of counterespionage might feel upon discovering that he had personally invited the fox into the coop. Might not such a man go over the edge?

I'm not going to list here the bona fide Russian defectors Angleton destroyed (or the colleagues who defended them whose careers he ruined) in the wake of Philby's betrayal. I won't even list the names of the naive bumblers who built their professional lives on the basis of his suspicions. Mangold has listed some of them already. You can read the list. And you should.

But here's the lesson. No, an intelligence agency cannot exist without a counterintelligence chief. Yes, the job of counterintelligence chief is to be skeptical, to know details, to try to put those details together, always with suspicion. But the line between suspicion and paranoia is a fine one. Angleton crossed it many, many years ago.

—*Tom Braden*

Fighting for Air: In the Trenches with Television News. Liz Trotta. *Simon and Schuster, $22.95.* This is a book laced with bitterness. Trotta is bitter about the discrimination she suffered as she fought for recognition in the "man's world" of network news. She is bitter about the hazing and the slights, the inferior assignments, the double standards for accomplishment and conduct, the lack of recognition she suffered. And she is bitter that when the networks finally woke up to the need to be equal-opportunity employers, the women given big chances often were not the ones, like Trotta, who had slugged it out in the trenches, learning the craft and paying their dues, but young *femmes fatales* who wouldn't have known the press center at Danang from Germaine's restaurant on Wisconsin Avenue.

Ah, Liz, perhaps you're entitled: Lord knows it's true that the business has discriminated—and still discriminates—against women. But as one reads this book, the question keeps nagging: Did Trotta's constant disappointments stem from her sex or from other factors?

In 1965, Trotta went to work for the NBC affiliate in New York. She had worked in print and makes no secret of her view that print reporters are the true journalists of this world. She soon won a network spot and took all the tough assignments of her day, including Vietnam; she was the first woman television reporter to be stationed there. Trotta is at her best recounting war stories from her coverage of Vietnam and other trouble spots. While there is no doubt that she shared all the hardships, braved all the

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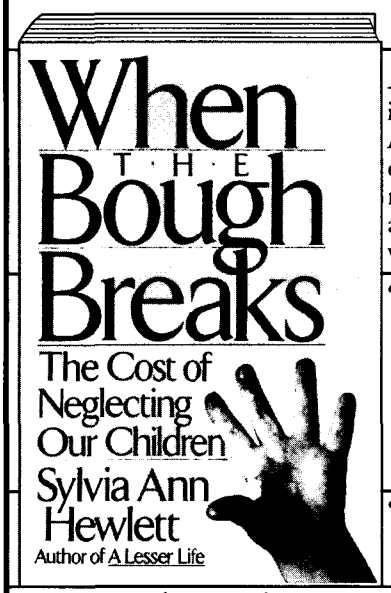

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dangers, and scored all the deadline beats the world's hell holes had to offer, her career at NBC never really took off.

Trotta seems to have idolized Chet Huntley (odd for a no-nonsense print reporter, since Huntley was strictly a studio broadcaster). She suggests that her big troubles with NBC management began in earnest with Huntley's departure. Trotta blames her problems on sex discrimination, management philistines, and the everyday incompetence of many NBC staff members. But she also admits she was "difficult" in temperament and behavior. I am not one to complain about that, except to say I don't know any other reporter who has purposely slammed a metal microphone into the jaw of someone attempting to bar her from a story. True, NBC's Andrea Mitchell once dug her elbow into an offending cameraman's ribs as she jockeyed for position on the White House rose garden colonnade, but that was more or less *en famille*. Trotta struck a civilian who promptly sued NBC, which didn't help Trotta's reputation with her bosses. For whatever reasons, by 1979 she had been forced out.

CBS soon hired her. There, she adored Walter Cronkite and disliked Dan Rather, whom she paints as vain and duplicitous. Her assignments soon became mediocre. Granted, she was assigned a presidential candidate in 1984, but George McGovern? Trotta writes of this insult, "It wasn't enough that I had loathed every position McGovern had taken as the Democratic nominee in 1972, particularly against the war, but now I had to record weeks of his prissy moralizing, his yappy delivery." To her credit, I believe, she also writes that she "grew to like him enormously, admiring his grace and subtle humor, his old-fashioned decency." However, whether she liked him or hated him, she didn't get on the air with him. CBS let her go during a budget cutback the next year.

In summarizing her feelings about her 20 years in TV, Trotta finds that a Gene McCarthy quote about politics and football applies neatly to TV news: "Those who run it are smart enough to understand the game and dumb enough to think it's important."

For those who don't like television news and simply want their suspicions about its superficial style, nonprofessional habits, and sex discrimination confirmed, this book is perfect. Trotta accurately pinpoints certain conditions (and certain people) that deserve skewering. But for page after page, one is led to believe that television news is predominantly the product of selfish flim-flam artists in management and, on screen, know-nothing anchors more interested in their hair spray than their facts. In this book, Trotta's "good guys" always seem to finish last. For a more balanced, and, I believe, more accurate look at the TV network news business, we'll have to wait for books by Diane Sawyer, Lesley Stahl, Cokie Roberts, Andrea Mitchell, Rita Braver, Carole Simpson, Katherine Couric, and a host of other women who also suffered the slights while paying their dues but who persevered and went on to assignments equal to or better than those attained by their male colleagues.

Liz Trotta fought the good fight. She deserves credit for that. It's just too bad for her—and now for her readers—that her fight was a losing one.

—*Sam Donaldson*

Panama: The Whole Story. Kevin Buckley. *Simon & Schuster, $21.95.* Relations between the U.S. government and the nasty Third World dictator were collaborative, even cordial. They secretly joined forces against governments that seemed most threatening to U.S. interests at the time. All the while, evidence that the dictator was abusing his own people, not to mention double-dealing behind Washington's back, was pooh-poohed both publicly and privately by U.S. officials. Realpolitik, it was said, dictated discretion.

After this had gone on quietly for years, the dictator's unforeseen outbursts of brutality made the policy untenable. Haltingly at first, then with gathering momentum, Washington changed its attitude toward the dictator from indulgence to vilification. An avalanche of officially sourced news coverage painted the U.S.'s former partner as Public Enemy Number One. His ugly mug disgraced magazine covers. And his removal from power became a minimum condition of U.S. national security.

After failed negotiations and much hand-wringing in Congress and the bureaucracy—a process marked by the usual leaked recriminations about who was to blame for the mess in the first place—the president finally ordered U.S. troops to fight the dictator. In a swift campaign marked by considerable American military prowess and charges that U.S. firepower had been employed with insufficient regard for civilian life, America dealt the dictator the defeat of his life.

A thumbnail history of George Bush's showdown with Saddam Hussein, right? Well, yes. But change a phrase here and there and you've also got a synopsis of the clash between the United States and Panama's Manuel Antonio Noriega, the subject of Kevin Buckley's thorough, readable new book.

Buckley's book is particularly strong in its treatment of two themes. First, the author explains in detail the role Panama's peculiar internal politics played in driving the crisis forward. Most versions of the story are told as if all the action took place in Washington, or are presented as catalogs of Noriega's personal pathologies. Buckley reminds us that the events that culminated in the U.S. invasion were the most violent in Panama since the United States carved the country out of Colombia in 1903. And a main reason these events happened was the Panamanians' own failure to develop political institutions or movements that could have established a legitimate government without U.S. help.

Second, Buckley emphasizes the role of U.S. electoral politics in the unfolding of the crisis. In 1988, a presidential election year, drugs were the dominant issue, and it was by no means clear who would win the right to succeed Ronald Reagan. Former CIA director and Noriega contact George Bush, mindful that Noriega might have some bombshell on him in his intelligence files, did not want a messy confrontation in Panama that might spoil his election chances. At the same time, Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis refused to let the issue of Noriega's indictment on drug trafficking die, accusing Reagan-Bush of "negotiating with dope peddlers."

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Bashing Noriega—who, though important to the Medellin cartel's activities, was by no means the boss of the operation—was a cheap way for politicians on both sides of the partisan stripe to score points with the voters. Noriega's main nemeses in Congress were liberal John Kerry and conservatives Jesse Helms and Al D'Amato. Noriega astutely exploited the climate of election-year demagogy, leading the Reagan administration along for weeks in a phony mid-1988 negotiation process before finally telling the U.S. he had no intention of leaving after all.

Unfortunately for Buckley, *Panama: The Whole Story* appears about 18 months after the military intervention that ousted Noriega and more than a year since the publication of two superb and widely read versions of the same story: Frederick Kempe's *Divorcing the Dictator* and John Dinges's *Our Man in Panama*. Both of those books packed more reportorial punch than Buckley's effort, which leans heavily on contemporaneous press accounts and oft-quoted sources.

One source Buckley probably relies on a bit too much is Guillermo Sanchez Borbon, a brave but excitable Panamanian journalist. Sanchez Borbon, coauthor of a lurid book of his own about the Noriega years, *Time of the Dictators*, has been the font of many an intriguing but unproven account of the dictator's perfidy, several of which Buckley repeats.

Still, the timeliness of the book is enhanced by Noriega's impending trial in Miami, at which new information about his past dealings with the U.S. may yet emerge, and by the continuing fallout of the Gulf war. Whether or not you think the invasion of Panama and the war to liberate Kuwait were justified (I think they were), there's plenty to be learned by going back over the trail of U.S. policy mistakes that helped make force necessary. In both Iraq and Panama, war was mostly the result of the enemy's venality or intransigence. But in both cases, war became necessary because U.S. statecraft, intelligence-gathering, and diplomacy failed or were abused in the name of realpolitik. Iraq and Panama suggest that, if what we want is to secure our interests abroad without having to go to war, then a "realistic" way to choose allies should factor in their dedication to mushy liberal notions like human rights, honesty, and democracy. Now all we need is a foolproof, perfectly objective way to measure those qualities in all leaders, at all times, in every place.

—*Charles Lane*

Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World. Daniel Yankelovich. *Syracuse University Press, $34.95.*

Along with negative TV spots, high-octane PACs, and shrinking voter turnout, the profusion of contradictory and confusing public opinion polls is often cited as a symptom of the unraveling of the American democracy. But in his new book, *Coming to Public Judgment,* public opinion analyst Daniel Yankelovich takes a rather refreshing perspective: Polls need not be part of the problem. They can even be part of the solution.

Rather than attacking the usual villains—poor leadership and shortsightedness—Yankelovich contends that our democracy faces a more fundamental threat from "the eroding ability of the American public to participate in the political decisions that affect their lives." The usually healthy balance between the expert and the public has shifted away from the people, and we are increasingly in the hands of what he terms "the culture of technical control." Drawing on his experience as one of the country's most thoughtful pollsters, he argues that we need the public to participate in making the hard choices that paralyze our elected leaders.

For a serious student of public opinion, Yankelovich's discussion of the inherent strengths and weaknesses of popular American thought is a judicious assessment. He concedes that "the public is pragmatic and poorly informed," but then asks: Are ignorance and the absence of a consistent political philosophy sufficient to dismiss the public as a potential contributor to the political process? The policy experts and much of the media would have us believe the answer is yes, but Yankelovich argues to the contrary.

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He lambasts the media for being "fascinated with opinion polls that show how ignorant the public is. Conduct a poll that reveals that the majority of Americans cannot name a single justice of the Supreme Court or locate Siberia on a map, and it is sure to get wide TV and newspaper coverage." But, as Yankelovich points out—and any pollster worth his salt would agree—current events knowledge is not the litmus test for being able to contribute usefully to the democratic process. You don't need to know what MIRV means to value arms control. The public brings something even more important to the table: evolving but enduring values that give it the means to evaluate difficult choices.

The problem is that the public has (or will offer if questioned) an opinion on almost every issue, even long before a particular issue has taken shape. This makes it very hard for most people, including our elected leaders, to know whether the public is expressing a well thought-out sentiment or just shooting off its mouth.

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Congress Oversees the United States Intelligence Community, 1947-1989

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These perceptual problems are only exacerbated by the media's obsession with "cheap, crude" polls. Yankelovich does not go far enough in excoriating the media for using quick and dirty polls that trivialize the public's potential contribution to the national dialogue. These media-sponsored surveys often lay waste to all the methodologies and questionnaire-construction techniques that can make public opinion polls (when used responsibly and in the right set of circumstances) an accurate barometer of public attitudes. Their main purpose, clearly, is to soothe an editor's conscience that he or she has touched the public pulse.

Even when polls are well constructed, all poll users face the dilemma of sorting out nascent public reactions from well-formed public judgments. Yankelovich offers three simple criteria for assessing the quality of public opinion: the willingness of the public to take responsibility for the consequences of its views, the volatility of opinion, and the consistency of the opinion with the public's other views.

"The threefold definition of quality has some drawbacks," Yankelovich notes. "It does not encompass some of the most appealing features of public opinion—its bursts of generosity, its fierce sense of fairness and passion for justice, its love of country, its religious faith, and its fidelity to basic values." His claim that his three-part test serves as an accurate gauge of public opinion quality is nonetheless quite credible.

I would maintain that a fair amount of volatility can coexist with well-formed public judgment. Take abortion and euthanasia, both issues on which public attitudes continue to evolve despite the enormous energy the public has invested in examining the values that underlie them. But quibbling aside, Yankelovich is absolutely right on the need for poll users to understand the distinction between the various types and qualities of public opinion, which varies widely from issue to issue.

For example, a steady three-quarters of the population has felt for at least 15 years that the danger posed by handguns merits mandatory federal registration. Until recently, this consensus had not led to any meaningful legislation, thanks to the work of a determined and monied minority. There can be no question that the public has carefully evaluated the liberty-versus-communal-safety question and come down squarely for gun control.

However, on the critical question of economic competitiveness, the public has much to learn. There is a general sense that we are facing a crisis, as evinced by the fact that a sizable majority views the economic threat from Japan as more serious than the military threat from the Soviet Union. But public opinion on what to do ranges all over the map.

While Yankelovich hails the public's ability to decide many complex issues, his contempt for the experts is extreme. "The logic is this: They, the experts, are well informed; the public is poorly informed. Give the public more information, and it will agree with them." His faith in the public's ability to work its way through every problem is also overdrawn, but his appreciation of the continuing vitality of the values at the core of American public opinion is well founded. He reminds us that good judgment, not information, is the single most important ingredient for constructive opinion formation.

—*Nicholas Wurf*

Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services. Ian Black, Benny Morris. *Grove Weidenfeld, $24.95.* After Israeli agents scooped the world intelligence "community" by coming up with a copy of Khrushchev's "crimes of Stalin" speech, after the Israelis unexpectedly thrashed the Arabs in 1967, and after commandos swooped into Uganda's Entebbe airport to rescue hostages held by Arab and German hijackers, novelists and scriptwriters fell madly in love with the idea of the Israeli secret agent. Romanticizing him as invincible, with God forever on his side, few of the writers knew what they were talking about—except John Le Carre in *Little Drummer Girl*, which authors Ian Black and Benny Morris call "the best literary treatment of Israeli intelligence." That's how shrouded in mystery and myth are the Aman (the Israel Defence Force's intelligence arm), Mossad, and Shin Bet—the three Israeli agencies described in this exhaustive and engrossing book.

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Ian Black, author of *Zionism and the Arabs,* is *The Manchester Guardian*'s man in Israel; Benny Morris is an Israeli diplomatic historian and journalist and the author of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Question, 1947-1949*. Despite official censorship and secrecy, they managed to base this book on secret reports, declassified files of cable traffic and interrogations, the Hebrew press, interviews, and speculation. The result is rather impressive—neither an exposé nor as sensationalistic as former Mossad agent Victor Ostrovsky's recent book, *By Way of Deception*, which Black and Morris praise for its descriptions of Al, a Mossad secret unit supposedly used for espionage operations in the United States, and Kidon, an "assassinations unit."

No wonder legions of writers have been drawn into the web. There's murder and sex and intrigue; Israeli spies in the Soviet Union and Soviet moles in the Israeli defense ministry; Mossad agents in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq; assassination teams and alleged death squads; and even, we are told, agents spying on the right-wing Herut and left-wing Mapam at home. And everywhere else, old scores to settle, one way or another. It's hardly surprising, then, that after reading a declassified Shin Bet interrogation of a prisoner, Israeli commentator Yigal Sarna wrote: "If someone were to take everything that's been written about the Palestinians in the State of Israel since the beginning of the conflict—details of lives, families, daily routine—literature will lag far behind the archives of the security forces."

Yet the ultimate effect of this new book is to further undermine the myth of the infallibility of the Mossad and Shin Bet. As the Intifada powerfully illustrates, policy-by-intelligence has inevitable limitations. There are some political gulfs, it seems, that even the best secret agents can't bridge.

In 1973, the investigating commission scrutinizing the conduct of the Yom Kippur War ("Israel's grand intelligence failure") excoriated Aman for failing to "correctly evaluate" the warnings of Egyptian and Syrian preparation for war. Actually, there were two unsung heroes, one of them a junior intelligence officer who reported that the Egyptians were set to cross the Suez Canal and was promptly rebuffed by his superiors; the other, an Aman senior officer who alerted his superior to the coming war and was told: "Stop assessing and stick to your job, which is collecting intelligence."

Israel's greatest intelligence disaster, according to the authors, was the invasion of Lebanon, of which a Shin Bet official later said, "In order to stay sane and stay alive, you had to do things that were unacceptable." There were plenty of intelligence miscalculations and blunders, as the Kahan investigating commission reported. But it was also true that just before the invasion and doubtless during the war, "intelligence facts were being selectively marshalled to suit the grand political and military design."

There were other failures as well: the Pollard case, in which key Israelis "gave the Americans just enough material to incriminate Pollard, but it was wrapped in so many lies that the Americans quickly lost faith in the Israeli version," and the Iran-contra affair, in which Mossad was "shut out of the picture completely," casting Israel "in a vital [but] a supporting role." At one point, George Shultz had to remind Robert McFarlane that "Israel's agenda is not the same as ours, and an intelligence relationship with Israel concerning Iran might not be one upon which we could fully rely"—a warning that apparently fell on deaf ears.

Black and Morris blame Israeli intelligence for failing "to read the changing political and psychological map of the enemy camp" before and after the outbreak of the Intifada in 1987. The agencies infiltrated, monitored, pursued, deployed, and smashed, yet "tactical virtuosity is one thing; strategic blindness another." The Shin Bet, often performing brilliantly, was drawn reluctantly into the civil war. Still, its success has not diminished the bitterness felt by Palestinians or moderated their intense desire for independence. "Like the IDF," Black and Morris wisely conclude, "[Shin Bet] had growing doubts as to just how long it could manage without the achievement of that most elusive of goals, a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

—*Murray Polner*

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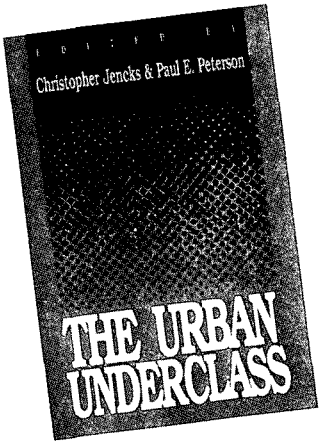

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